air forum

Program Guide

May 20 – May 23, 2025

ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Monday, May 19, 2025

Pre-Conference Education

Foundations Bootcamp: The Cornerstone for Any IR Professional (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 9

Institutional research professionals are subject matter experts who help stakeholders answer questions in pursuit of data-informed decision making. Although this is an important aspect of IR, answering questions is not helpful if inquiries don't illuminate the true knowledge sought. IR professionals are more than just curators of information—we are partners in discovery, which requires helping institutional colleagues clarify goals and refine questions in addition to the analysis of data, making sense of results, communicating findings, and generating insights. This workshop is an intensive exploration of IR's agency in data-informed decision cultures and highlights the skills required to be effective in this field. It is an extension of AIR's highly successful virtual Foundations series and an essential experience for any IR professional. The workshop starts with a question and sees an IR project through to its culmination. Workshop elements include principles of research design, survey design, descriptive statistics, effective reporting and communication, and translating findings into recommendations.

Presenter(s): Carolyn Mata

LEADing with Action: Beyond the Data (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 2

Are you looking to advance in your career? This seminar will help you develop the human-centered skills essential for leadership and professional growth within and beyond IR/IE. While technical expertise and domain knowledge are crucial in your work, their value is only realized when your insights are effectively communicated and understood. This seminar centers on the mindsets and habits required to connect with a variety of stakeholders and translate findings to actionable information. Key topics include the power of listening, understanding and overcoming the curse of knowledge, and navigating change. Participants will be challenged to push beyond their comfort zones in a supportive environment designed to help them grow into more holistic and effective data professionals and leaders.

Presenter(s): Mary Ann Coughlin

Tableau for Beginners: Visualizing Data to Measure and Communicate (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 8

As a market-leading choice for modern business intelligence (BI), the Tableau software platform is known for taking data from almost any system and turning it into actionable insights with speed and ease. This full-day workshop will provide attendees with an introduction to data visualization basics and how to: create several of Tableau's primary chart types, aggregate tables/charts into usable dashboards, utilize filters to customize views, utilize navigation tools to switch between views, and publish and share their

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work. While no data visualization experience is needed, to get the most out of this course students should have a working knowledge of spreadsheet applications such as Microsoft Excel. This workshop will be conducted in the free Tableau Public platform, however all skills learned will transfer to the Tableau Desktop application.

Presenter(s): Eric Atchison; Elizabeth Wakefield

The Art and Science of Managing the IR Office (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 5

Most IR directors and other management staff move up from within the field. But when we are promoted into management positions, we rarely receive any formal or structured learning opportunities on what management means and how to do it well. Allocating resources, managing workflow, and leading a team require different mindsets and skills from the individual contributors we used to be. In this workshop, we will focus on building, managing and communicating with your team and effectively managing resources such as staff time and budget to achieve your office goals, including exercises designed to consider how you might apply what you've learned when you return to your institution. Whether you are new to managing an office or just never had the opportunity to learn about it in a structured way, this may be the experience for you.

Presenter(s): Jeremy Goodman

12:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Letting Go! – Using a federated DaaS model to expand IR's/CDO's impact (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 10

Institutional Research/Data Office (IR/DO) has traditionally been the go-to department for accurate reports. And then those wonderful reports die! However, in a tough higher-ed market where data is to be used not just for compliance purposes but also to drive change that supports university goals, IR departments need to adapt. It starts with Letting Go of our trusted datasets and democratizing our report creation skills so more departments can leverage our data and co-create reports.

Presenter(s): Eldrid Sequeira

Leveraging NLP Techniques for Text Mining and Analytics in IR (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 3

This workshop provides institutional researchers with the tools and knowledge needed to harness the power of Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Large Language Models (LLMs) for text mining and analytics. Participants will learn to process and analyze unstructured data, such as survey responses and feedback, using NLP techniques and pre-trained LLMs.. By gaining hands-on experience, attendees will be able to effectively categorize text, perform sentiment analysis, recognize and extract named entities to support data-driven decision-making in their institutions. This session is ideal for those interested in transforming unstructured data into actionable insights, ultimately enhancing institutional research capabilities.

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Presenter(s): Ying Lin

Linear Regression Analysis for Institutional Research (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 1

Session Abstract:This workshop is aimed at building a solid understanding of the linear regression model, and its applications to solve the problems in institutional research. This hands-on workshop uses real-world data to predict first-year college GPA with independent variables like high school GPA, SAT scores, student gender, ethnicity, and Pell Grant. The results of the linear regression analysis can be used for establishing the admission index for a university or for a state higher education system. The workshop focuses on using Excel and SPSS to run the model, testing the assumptions, interpreting the results, and applying the results to real-world problems.

Presenter(s): Yuxiang Liu

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Pre-Conference Education

Automating Workflows and Building Dashboards (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 3

We often engage in repetitive tasks that are structured in nature and follow a series of rule-based logic steps. These tasks can be labor intensive and are often tedious and boring leading to inadvertent errors. Automating this type of work historically required extensive programming or scripting knowledge to create systems that ingested and manipulated data from otherwise disconnected systems. Today, automated workflow tools bring the ability to perform these tasks automatically to non-programmers, allowing us to spend time on tasks that require more nuance. Once we have data collected in one place, it can also be a challenge to present that data in meaningful ways that allow users to more readily see patterns and trends. Dashboards and data visualizations can make accessing and interpreting data easier, helping drive the adoption of data-driven decision-making. This workshop will introduce attendees to designing their own automated workflows and building data dashboards.

Presenter(s): Christopher Petrie, DC; Angel Radick

Foundations Bootcamp: The Cornerstone for Any IR Professional (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 9

Institutional research professionals are subject matter experts who help stakeholders answer questions in pursuit of data-informed decision making. Although this is an important aspect of IR, answering questions is not helpful if inquiries don't illuminate the true knowledge sought. IR professionals are more than just curators of information—we are partners in discovery, which requires helping institutional colleagues clarify goals and refine questions in addition to the analysis of data, making sense of results, communicating findings, and generating insights. This workshop is an intensive exploration of IR's agency in data-informed decision cultures and highlights the skills required to be effective in this field. It is an extension of AIR's highly successful virtual Foundations series and an essential experience for any IR professional. The workshop starts with a question and sees an IR project through to its culmination. Workshop elements include principles of research design, survey design, descriptive statistics, effective reporting and communication, and translating findings into recommendations.

Presenter(s): Carolyn Mata

Harnessing Power BI for Insightful Student Experience Survey Dashboards (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 10

Session Abstract:Effectively visualizing student experience data is crucial for improving satisfaction and retention. This hands-on workshop guides participants in building a Power BI dashboard report containing several dashboards from a template, transforming raw survey data into actionable insights. Learn how to reshape data in Power BI, use prompt engineering with Microsoft Copilot or ChatGPT for text analysis, and apply STAR schema for efficient modeling. Participants will master custom DAX calculations, advanced formatting, and secure sharing via Power BI workspaces. By the end, participants will be able to create elegant dashboards that succinctly communicate survey results, whether it's Likert-scale data, promoter feedback, or open-ended responses. Join us to enhance your data analysis and visualization skills, unlocking the power of your survey data!

Presenter(s): Sarah Gallimore

Integrating Data Governance and Data Literacy: A Cross-Functional Strategy (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 5

Session Abstract:This interactive workshop will explore the integration of Data Governance (DG) and Data Literacy (DL) across the data lifecycle. Led by four experts from different universities, the session will provide diverse perspectives on developing data literacy programs within a governance framework. Key questions will be addressed, such as the components of an effective data literacy program, necessary training and support, its importance, strategies to consider, and participant roles. Participants will gain insights into the importance of fostering data literacy as part of their institution's governance efforts, with a focus on creating cross-functional collaborations between Institutional Research, IT, and academic units. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and resources to enhance their data literacy programs, along with a call to action for prioritizing data literacy in governance initiatives.

Presenter(s): Ivana Fredotovic; Melissa Barnett; Susan Gracia; Heather Epstein-Diaz

LEADing Change with Analytics: Bridging the Gap from Data to Decisions (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 7

Movement from data insights to taking action involves more than access to data, analyses, and reports—it requires leadership, facilitation, and strategic communication to translate information into action. Institutional research and effectiveness professionals are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between data and making data-informed decisions. This interactive, half-day workshop is based on the Change with Analytics Playbook (AIR, EDUCAUSE, NACUBO, 2024) and will help you learn to navigate the path to data-informed decision making and, more importantly, lead efforts to do so at your institution. Through a series of interactive exercises, you will develop strategies to engage stakeholders, navigate resistance, and foster a culture of data-informed decision making.

Presenter(s): Jeremy Goodman

LEADing with Action: Beyond the Data (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
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Are you looking to advance in your career? This seminar will help you develop the human-centered skills essential for leadership and professional growth within and beyond IR/IE. While technical expertise and domain knowledge are crucial in your work, their value is only realized when your insights are effectively communicated and understood. This seminar centers on the mindsets and habits required to connect with a variety of stakeholders and translate findings to actionable information. Key topics include the power of listening, understanding and overcoming the curse of knowledge, and navigating change. Participants will be challenged to push beyond their comfort zones in a supportive environment designed to help them grow into more holistic and effective data professionals and leaders.

Presenter(s): Mary Ann Coughlin

Logistic Regression Analysis for Institutional Research (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 1

This workshop is aimed at building a solid understanding of the logistic regression model, and its applications to solve the problems in institutional research. The model can be used to predict student retention, graduation, or the probability of other events happening. This hands-on, interactive workshop uses the real-world data to predict student first-to-second-year retention (one-year retention, the dependent variable) with such independent variables as the first-year college GPA, student gender, ethnicity, the status of receiving the PELL grant, and in-state or out-of-state status. The workshop uses Excel and SPSS to run the model, focusing on interpreting the results, and applying the results to real-world problems.

Presenter(s): Yuxiang Liu

The Art and Science of Enrollment Forecasting (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 8

Session Abstract:In this workshop, participants will be introduced to an enrollment forecasting model used to project enrollments at a large (20,000+) public university for over 20 years. Adaptable to institutions of any size, the model, which is based in Excel, can help institutions forecast future enrollments using historical data and sound reasoning. While the model shown will focus largely on how to project progression of continuing students, the presenter will share additional strategies for forecasting new enrollment and how this information is communicated to stakeholders. Attendees will receive a template to use with their institution's data and receive examples of how results are shared.

Presenter(s): Chris Orem

Turning PDP Cohort Analysis-Ready Data into Actionable Insights using Power BI Description (INVITE ONLY/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)
Pre-Conference Sessions | Wekiwa 4

Are you curious about how to unlock the full potential of the National Student Clearinghouse's PDP Cohort and Course Analysis-Ready (AR) files? In this hands-on workshop, we show you how to turn these datasets into actionable insights. We start with an introduction to the Cohort and Course AR files, including how they can be used individually or together to answer key student success questions. Then,

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we demonstrate a Power BI dashboard built using the Cohort AR file, featuring visualizations on institutional characteristics, Gateway Course attempts and completions, credits earned, and time to completion. Then, participants will have the opportunity to upload their institution's Cohort AR file (or use a sample dataset) and, in small groups, explore the dashboard and discuss ways to adapt the template to meet their institution's needs.

Presenter(s): Monte Schaff; Darlena Jones

12:00 PM - 12:45 PM

First Time at Forum Session
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4

Meet other newcomers and learn from volunteer leaders who will share tips about making the most of the conference experience; including networking tips, an insider's guide to the AIR Forum schedule, and insight on using the conference app to stay in the know, streamline your schedule, and make lasting connections.

1:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Impact Sessions (included with AIR Forum registration)

The 2025 AIR Forum officially begins on Tuesday, May 20 with a series of curated Impact Sessions focused on a wide range of emerging and important topics and issues with impact for everyone in higher education. These sessions are open to all registered AIR Forum attendees and are included in your regular AIR Forum registration. Impact sessions include lectures, panel presentations, and interactive discussions. Impact sessions are 90-minute sessions scheduled in two consecutive time blocks from 1:00–2:30 p.m. and 3:00–4:30 p.m.

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

The Analytics Transformation: From Data-Informed to Data-Engaged Campus
Impact Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Decision Support

As our institution navigates the complexities of a data-centric landscape, transitioning from being data-informed to actively data-engaged is critical for remaining relevant. This session will highlight various approaches to data engagement and showcase transformative practices that create a robust framework for support—whether technical, strategic, or educational. We will present multiple strategies, including course analytics that enhance student success, initiatives in data literacy, and the implementation of cloud-based data warehouses. These elements, woven together by IR as the center of excellence on data and analytics, form an institutional data fabric that underpins informed decision-making. Participants will learn how our institutional research office positions itself as a strategic partner, fostering a dynamic data-engaged culture that ultimately improves student outcomes and enhances institutional effectiveness. Contributing Authors: Rick Burnette – Florida State University

Presenter(s): Heather Epstein-Diaz; James Hunt; Samantha Nix

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The State of the Profession: Results from the 2024 AIR National Survey
Impact Session | Sebastian I1+2

Across institutions, the role of the IR/IE Office varies dramatically, as captured in the 2024 AIR National Survey. In some settings, the office focuses solely on mandatory reporting, responding to national surveys, and providing information to senior leadership. In others, its responsibilities expand to include research, institutional effectiveness, accreditation, strategic planning, and business analytics. Moreover, some institutions centralize IR and IE functions within a single office, while others distribute these roles across multiple units—either working collaboratively or independently. The organizational structures range from streamlined to complex multi-layered models, making it challenging to capture the full spectrum of our IR/IE profession. The AIR National Survey launched for the fourth time in fall 2024, and this Impact Session presents summary results covering areas such as organizational structure, staffing, office work output, and institutional data maturity.

Presenter(s): Darlena Jones

Unpacking the 2025 Carnegie Classifications
Impact Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Assessment & Evaluation

In this session, leaders from the Carnegie Classifications will walk through the April 2025 updates to the classification system, including the revised Institutional Classification and a new Student Access and Earnings Classification that examines the extent to which an institution is enrolling students who reflect the communities it serves and whether those students go on to earn competitive wages compared to peers in their area. They will explain the vision behind the changes, walk through the new methodologies, and show a new interactive data tool that creates a way for institutional researchers to engage with the new Student Access and Earnings Classification and explore different analyses. They will also engage in a conversation about the decisions behind the classifications, takeaways they have had, and what future releases could look like. The session will include time for audience questions.

Presenter(s): Sara Gast; Mushtaq Gunja; Kyle Whitman

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Chief Data Officers and the Functions They Lead: Imagining and Strategizing for a Future We Can't See
Impact Session | Sebastian I1+2

As an extension of the 2024 National Survey, AIR surveyed Chief Data Officers (CDOs) in 2025 to explore their roles and responsibilities. The survey included individuals who are CDOs by title and self-identified "de facto" CDOs. The summary results will be presented in this Impact Session, including a crosswalk with the National Survey. Findings will be illuminated by current CDOs. Join us to learn about the creation and work of the data and analytics functions led by CDOs. Of particular focus is the need for leadership and strategic thinking to identify what an institution needs right now while imagining a future we can't see or predict. Attention will be paid to the ways in which CDO functions differ from more traditional IR/IE offices and to the essential mindsets required of the CDO role.

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Presenter(s): Darlena Jones; Olivia Kew-Fickus; Ivana Fredotovic

Insights That Impact: Engaging Stakeholders Through Survey Data Storytelling
Impact Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Assessment & Evaluation

In today's data-driven environment, effective reporting of survey results is critical. Institutional research is uniquely positioned to support stakeholders in using survey data to tell their story. This panel will share various tools and strategies for presenting survey data based on what resonates best with different stakeholder audiences. Discussion will touch upon strategies for analysis—including the benefits and challenges of using AI and communication tools, including dashboards, presentations. The experiences of our diverse panelists, two-year and four-year as well as large and small institutions, will ensure relevant takeaways for the audience. Attendees will learn to tailor approaches to senior leadership, faculty, staff, or students, to ensure that the data lead to action and continuous improvement.

Presenter(s): Nichole Petersen; Joe Ludlum; Michael Bolen; Martin Stelmach; Simran Kaur; Heather Rondeau

Party at the Lakehouse: Enhancing Data Ecosystems and Stakeholder Engagement
Impact Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Join us on our continuing data strategy journey. This session builds on last year's data lakehouse impact session. This year, we explore the evolution of CMU's Data Lakehouse strategy and its impact on our campus. This session will cover three key topics: the growth of our data lakehouse, the vital role of community engagement in data initiatives, and our recent decision to adopt a franchise model for scaling up our growing data needs. Attendees will discover how an integrated data strategy can enhance institutional effectiveness and data governance. The session will provide actionable insights and practical strategies to foster collaboration and informed decision-making within our institutions. Whether you're a seasoned professional or new to data strategies, this session will equip you with valuable tools and knowledge to navigate the challenges of a data-driven environment. Join us to share our data evolution and learn how to elevate your institution's approach to data.

Presenter(s): Henry Zheng; Matthew Hoolsema; Roman Mitz

4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Opening reception in the Exhibit Hall
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K | Opening Reception

Join us for the Opening reception in the Exhibit Hall and be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there!

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

7:45 AM - 10:00 AM

Opening Keynote
Keynote | Gatlin A/B

7:45 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Breakfast Buffet and keynote seating
8:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Program and Opening Keynote Speaker

Unstoppable Resilience – The Keys to Staying Strong During Any Challenge

This is a uniquely difficult time for leaders and individual contributors in workplaces all over America. Employees are feeling increased anxiety and mental health challenges, and according to recent studies, Americans are the unhappiest they have been in the past 50 years. Navigating all the challenges can have a significant impact on one's overall well-being, mental health and resilience. Gain inspiration from resilience expert Shola Richards as he shares insights and practical strategies to build unshakable strength within ourselves and within our teams.

Speaker: Shola Richards

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Exhibit Hall and AIR networking hub open
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K

Our Exhibit Hall is the central networking hub for all attendees and sponsors.

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Adaptive Data Governance: Steps to Success
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Data governance is essential for institutional effectiveness and student success, yet many institutions struggle to establish strong frameworks due to competing demands and resource constraints. This session introduces an iterative, just-in-time approach—one that emphasizes adaptability, step-by-step progress, and real-world application. Drawing from my own experience, I will share a structured framework for adaptive data governance, supported by visual models, case examples, and an implementation roadmap. Attendees will: assess their current data governance efforts through an iterative lens; learn how to build or enhance governance through gradual improvements; and develop strategies to navigate implementation barriers with timely, practical solutions. This session provides actionable, flexible guidance to help institutions strengthen their data governance efforts.

Presenter(s): Tara L. Webb

AI-Driven Strategies for Analyzing Student Withdrawal
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

Not everyone who enrolls in college will leave with a certificate or degree, but the number of people who drop out or take a break is much higher than experts previously believed. In December 2018, there were 36 million people with some college education but no degree. It is imperative to understand the underlying factors contributing to student withdrawal and to assist decision-makers to identify effective strategies to prevent it. EMU conducted a comprehensive study of student withdrawals to understand the influencing factors. The paper revealed a high correlation between certain factors and withdrawals, even in the early stages of university attendance. Based on these findings, we developed a predictive model that employs artificial intelligence techniques to assess the potential risk that students abandon their studies. These models enable universities to implement early intervention strategies, support at-risk students, and improve overall higher education success.

Presenter(s): Yan Zhao; Amy Otteson

Assessing and Improving Administrative Effectiveness of Department Heads
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Assessment & Evaluation

This study is a summary of K-State's five-year assessment surveys on 22 department heads. The workflow and stakeholders of the assessments will be introduced first. Structure and administration of the surveys will be then presented. Outcomes of the assessments including department heads' performance will be visualized and compared in a few dimensions. A variety of analytical models, including stepwise regression models, correlation analysis and text mining, will be applied to identify critical factors and actions that may impact department heads' administrative effectiveness. Suggestions based on the findings will be given to improve department heads' administrative effectiveness. The session will help attendees conduct assessment surveys on academic leaders and interpret results of the surveys in a more professional way.

Presenter(s): Yuhao Liu

Bridging the Silos: Connecting Operational Data Across Student Affairs
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

As universities gather more data about students, it becomes necessary to port that data to a single location for ease of access. Data lakes provide a singular location where many different types of data can be stored and accessed by many individuals, but they only work if stakeholders can both add to and use the data in the repository. We present a case study of how to coordinate the systematic collection of data with department stakeholders to share data broadly, within the context of a large university system. A unique aspect of our approach is the creation of a webform that allows stakeholders to easily port their data into the data lake for further use. By providing a detailed overview of our approach and methodologies, we hope to offer valuable lessons that can be applied to similar efforts at other institutions, contributing to broader discussions on data-driven decision-making in higher education.

Presenter(s): Marjorie Freggens; Leah Halper

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Collecting Student Engagement Data: Gaining and Keeping Campus-Wide Buy-In
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Planning and successfully implementing student engagement can be a herculean and important task, but it is only part of the equation. Successfully recording who came and to what makes the difference between great assessment and no assessment! But how can an entire campus, or even better, university system, ensure data are collected accurately, consistently, and with enough information to inform decision-making? Even more difficult is creating a campus culture where collecting attendance is expected, where every group follows the same process. When this happens, students, faculty, and staff all know what to expect and how to do it. This session discusses a process implemented that has ensured planned events capture all this information—who came, to what, when, and how many events were attended. These data are saved for longitudinal research, merged with institutional data, and used to effectively evaluate the effects of student participation on retention, graduation rates, and more!

Presenter(s): Janice E. Childress

Data Reporting and Sharing at Community Colleges: Lessons Learned
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 2 | Decision Support

Data reporting requirements and preferences at community colleges differ vastly from those used at four-year institutions. The culture of data sharing and fulfilling requests at community colleges also differ. The purpose of this discussion session is for institutional researchers at two-year institutions to come together to discuss their lessons learned, challenges, and successes in fulfilling data requests at their institutions. Focus will be placed on the perspectives regarding (1) mandated state/federal/local reporting for two-year institutions; (2) types of requests received internally and to fulfill programmatic or grant needs; and (3) the way institutional researchers navigate fulfilling such requests at their two-year institution. It is hoped that this community-college-specific session will allow IRs to learn from one another, sharing their personal experiences and perspectives.

Presenter(s): Monte Angel Richardson

From Silos to Synergy: LSU's Journey to Unified Data Governance
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Technology & Tools

LSU's journey to integrated data governance demonstrates how institutions can transform their data management practices into a robust data ecosystem, regardless of technical resources or infrastructure. LSU's Office of Data and Strategic Analytics has implemented a comprehensive framework that bridges traditional silos through scalable solutions. This session details our multitiered implementation approach, from basic tools to advanced integrations, showing how effective governance can be achieved at any resource level. We will showcase how our domain-based governance approach, combined with practical strategies, has enhanced data trust and decision-making capabilities. Attendees will learn adaptable strategies for implementation, methods for building data quality and trust, and techniques for fostering partnerships. We will share both successes and challenges, providing insights for institutions to begin their governance journey with existing resources and scale up as their ecosystem grows.

Presenter(s): Anna C. Bartel; Adam Elder; Kristy Neal

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Impact of Test-Optional on Scholarship, Admission Support, and Student Success
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Research & Policy

The purpose of this study is to explore the impacts of the Test-Optional admission policy on scholarship awarding, access to support, and student success of new first-time, in-state students. The data of 5,866 new first-time students between 2017 and 2023 were analyzed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression analyses. The results indicate that the state scholarship is positively correlated with retention, but fewer students received the scholarship due to not providing a test score after the Test-Optional policy was implemented (Fall 2020). There has also been a decline in the number of students admitted with support. However, the Test-Optional policy does not show a statistically significant effect on fall-to-fall retention when considered with other variables as a whole model. The presentation will discuss practical recommendations regarding the Test-Optional policy for student success, admissions, and scholarship.

Presenter(s): Chen Zong; Steve Scott

Large-Scale Use of Learning Outcomes in Learning Management Systems
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Assessment & Evaluation

Supporting faculty to collect and interpret measures of student learning outcomes requires flexible methods. Valencia College has been assessing using the outcome feature within a learning management system (LMS) since 2018. The process has been refined so that over 50 unique groups of faculty can each measure their program outcomes that vary from highly technical to general education. The results are made meaningful by appending to additional student metrics and visualizing in dashboards that all faculty can access. Participants will discuss methods for embedding student learning measures in learning management systems, including the people and processes that need to be in place. The presenters will demonstrate dashboard visualizations and engage participants in interpreting the results of learning outcomes assessments.

Presenter(s): Nichole Fehrenbach; Cissy Reindahl; Collin Gustafson

Maximizing Student Success ROI Through a Focus on "Students at the Heart"
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3 | Decision Support

Student success is often measured in terms of timely graduation, but successful completion begins with retention. As a public institution with over 40,000 students and limited resources, California State University, Fullerton needs to strategically focus our effort to maximize the ROI on our retention efforts. Relying on data, we unpacked student performance through several lenses of increasing specificity to identify possible locations of intervention where student-success support could yield maximum impact. Specifically, our data "deep-dive" highlighted the importance of early retention, revealed classes that are critical to student experiences, and zoomed in on the subset of students—"students at the heart"—who could benefit the most from student-success interventions. Contributing Authors: Noha Abdou – California State University, Fullerton

Presenter(s): Afshin Karimi; Su Swarat

Practical Tools and Use Cases for GenAI in the IR Office
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Technology & Tools

This session will provide specific and practical examples of how generative AI can be used to automate some IR/IE tasks such as summarizing transcripts, identifying themes across open-ended survey responses, and sentiment analysis. Data security and privacy considerations will be covered. We will share our experience testing different AI model providers and cloud computing platforms, and will discuss how prompt engineering and more advanced methods such as Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) can be used to provide institutional context to improve model outputs.

Presenter(s): Matthew Hoolsema; Brandon Hutton

Promoting Data Literacy Across Campus: Strategies to Engage All Audiences
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

As data become central to decision-making in higher education, data professionals must navigate the challenge of fostering data literacy among diverse campus communities. This interactive discussion group invites attendees to share and explore strategies for promoting data literacy at their institutions. Attendees, who likely possess advanced data expertise, will discuss how to effectively communicate and engage with colleagues at various levels of data understanding—from beginners to experienced practitioners. By focusing on practical approaches to bridging knowledge gaps and fostering data-driven cultures, this session aims to provide actionable insights for promoting data literacy across departments and disciplines. Come prepared to share experiences and leave with strategies for making data accessible and impactful for all.

Presenter(s): Danielle Martinez; Kristi Norris; Matt Anson

Stronger Nation: A Conversation about Value
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Research & Policy

In March 2025 Lumina Foundation built upon its historical focus on educational attainment to set a new goal. Specifically, "By 2040, 75 percent of adults in the U.S. labor force will have college degrees or other credentials of value leading to economic prosperity." The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of the new goal, engage participants to answer methodological questions and to discuss emergent thoughts for the future. Attendee will be more knowledgeable about the methods used to determine value and rationale. Given that 49 states adopted attainment goals and many are adopting new goals, by having an awareness of the value conversation they will be better positioned to engage institutional leadership in value-focused conversations. The objectives of this session is to be transparent with the methodological choices that were made and to generate thoughts about future methodological decisions that will be made in the future.

Presenter(s): Christopher M. Mullin

U.S. News & World Report: Annual Update
Speaker Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Assessment & Evaluation

Each year, institutional researchers explain to nontechnical audiences highly technical information about their schools' rankings. This U.S. News-led session will help. It covers the following: recent changes to Best Colleges surveys and formulas; considerations for future editions; the timings of upcoming milestones; and resources available to school contacts ahead of publication. The session will conclude with a Q&A.

Presenter(s): Eric M. Brooks; Jessica Lou; Owen Turnbull; Robert Morse

Workforce Study: Empowering IR to Bridge Education and Employment
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Decision Support

With rising demands for accountability and a shifting labor market, workforce data are becoming essential for higher education institutions to enhance student outcomes and stay competitive. In response to major legislative acts such as the $2 trillion infrastructure investment, which increasingly requires data-driven, community-based workforce insights, institutions must adapt to support regional economic growth. By mapping Wisconsin's energy clusters, we demonstrate how visualizing combined workforce and educational data through interactive dashboards can inform institutional research and community engagement. The presentation showcases how data-driven insights can enable universities to anticipate opportunities and identify occupation and skill gaps, optimize academic programming, and strengthen ties between universities, employers, and regional economic strategies.

Presenter(s): Lixia Qin

11:15 AM - 11:35 AM

Enhancing Course Evaluation Data with AI Qualitative Analysis and Redaction
Sponsor Product Demonstration | Expo Theater 2 | Technology & Tools

Join this session to discover how institutions are extracting richer, more actionable insights from student feedback with AI-powered qualitative analysis. Learn how Explorance MLY can streamline your qualitative analysis, detecting comment sentiment, categorizing data into common topics, highlighting recommendations and alerts, and redacting sensitive content. In combination with Explorance Blue course evaluations and surveys, these tools help move you from data collection to decision-making, faster and with the highest quality insights.

Presenter(s): Umar Mushtaq

Funding Scenario Analysis for Higher Education Institutions
Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Expo Theater 1 | Technology & Tools

This presentation aims to equip attendees with the tools and methodologies needed to perform scenario analysis for university funding based on current resources and other relevant parameters. By leveraging data analytics, attendees will learn how to evaluate different funding scenarios and their potential impacts on the financial health of higher education institutions. The session will also introduce advanced analytics-based and predictive modeling techniques to augment traditional formula-based funding analysis. These techniques will provide a deeper understanding of the potential outcomes and enable optimization of funding decisions to ensure sustainable growth and stability.

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Presenter(s): John Berry

2025 Charles F. Elton Best Paper - Oceania in the Desert: A QuantCrit Analysis of the (Under)Counting of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Students at an AANAPISI-HSI
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3

Most education research uses IPEDS, often leaving the logic undergirding the IPEDS racial classification system (i.e., categorization and counting) unquestioned. Framed by QuantCrit principles, this research demonstrates how the IPEDS racial classification misrepresents and undercounts students. Specifically, we show how IPEDS guidance around racial classification misrepresents the number of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA&NHPI) undergraduates, with particular attention to NHPI students, at a single institution. We show the ways in which IPEDS logic leads to undercounting, namely that, based on the IPEDS racial classification system, most undergraduates identifying as NHPI are classified as Two or More Races and Hispanic or Latino. A similar pattern of suppression is found to varying degrees for students identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Black or African American. Our findings complicate the taken-for-granted nature of IPEDS racial classification and have implications for serving racially minoritized student groups and for institutions that may qualify as enrollment-based MSIs.

Presenter(s): Kristine Jan Cruz Espinoza; Blanca Rincón; Brent Drake; Judd Harbin; Kyle Ethelbah

An IR/Student Success Center Collaborative Project
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Assessment & Evaluation

Bridging student and academic affairs, our collaborative project at The University of Findlay incorporates two items that impact change aligned with UF's strategic plan. First, we endeavored to better understand student retention through building a more authentic picture of the student experience. Focusing on first-year students, we investigated what keeps them engaged. We determined our "sticky" factor (what does UF offer that makes students want to stay and strive toward graduation). Second, a formidable challenge our students face is academic preparedness for success in the classroom. While participating in the UF Preparedness Summit, visiting dozens of meetings and listening to many frustrations, we challenged our colleagues' tendency to bemoan the students we wish we had and challenged them to embrace the students we do have. Incorporating the outcomes of our "stickiness" investigation and our preparedness campaign, our project shaped campus-wide retention initiatives.

Presenter(s): Kristen R. Lindsay

Data and Distress: Managing Secondary Trauma in IR Through Well-Being Plans
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Leadership & Career Development

Campus climate surveys regularly collect data on instances of harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, and other forms of violence occurring at our institutions. Processing this nontypical data can negatively impact the way you feel about your organization, your work, and your relationships. This session applies lessons learned from social work and medical fields to explain how to successfully manage secondary trauma in institutional research through formalized well-being plans. This presentation includes an overview of the components of effective trauma stewardship,

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recommendations for well-being plan implementation, and examples of recent personal wellness plans for individuals and teams in higher education. The session will end with a discussion on how data have unexpectedly affected us all. Session attendees will leave with the confidence to minimize professional burnout associated with analyzing challenging data going forward.

Presenter(s): Jillian Morn

From Application to Aid: Data Dashboards Driving Financial Decisions
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

Dallas College's Financial Aid Dashboards—covering the FA FAFSA Processing Report, Financial Aid Dashboard, and Deregistration Dashboard—are transforming financial aid processes. These real-time dashboards help streamline application tracking, monitor disbursement, and prevent student deregistration by identifying at-risk students. In this session, we will explore how collaboration between Institutional Research (IR) and the Financial Aid Office led to the design and implementation of these tools, which improve operational efficiency and empower data-driven decisions. Whether you aim to enhance financial aid processes, optimize student outcomes, or adopt dynamic reporting tools, this session provides insights to help you revolutionize your approach to financial aid management.

Presenter(s): Chun Du; Taylor Souryachak

How IR Can Enhance Institutional Intelligence in Faculty Talent
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Technology & Tools

This session will discuss how institutional researchers can contribute to building institutional intelligence in the area of faculty talent using a free data source: the Bibliometrix package in R. The presenters will introduce two case scenarios, each representing a different type of institutional intelligence related to faculty talent. Participants in this session will learn how institutional researchers can contribute to the decision-making and strategic planning related to faculty by presenting evidence on research outcomes, topics, and collaboration networks. R scripts and report templates will be shared with attendees. Contributing Authors: Daria Ivleva, Boston University

Presenter(s): Wen Qi

Impacts of AI on Higher Education and Institutional Research
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Technology & Tools

This discussion group will explore how AI is transforming higher education and institutional research by enhancing data analysis, predictive modeling, student success initiatives, and operational efficiency. Topics include practical AI applications for identifying at-risk students, optimizing administrative workflows, and supporting strategic decision-making. Ethical concerns, such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and transparency, will also be addressed. Attendees will gain insights into best practices, key challenges, and opportunities, fostering collaboration with peers. The session aims to provide participants with actionable strategies for effectively implementing AI, enabling institutions to harness its transformative potential for improving educational outcomes and research capabilities. Participants will leave with a better understanding of AI's impact, the ethical use of AI, and ways to leverage AI technologies to drive institutional success in higher education.

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Presenter(s): Ying Lin

Making AI Work for Data Analytics
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Technology & Tools

There is a ton of hype around everything AI these days. In the data analytics realm there is a common perception that AI is poised to eliminate the need for the hard work of building data pipelines and preparing data for reports and analyses. Instead, people assume we can just "give AI all the data" and it will somehow make sense of it for us. The goal of this session is to cut through the hype and explore the practical applications of generative AI tools for data analytics

Presenter(s): Craig Rudick

Navigating the Rankings: Managing Campus Conversations
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 2 | Decision Support

Institutional ranking updates often trigger significant internal dialogue. This can be particularly relevant for institutional research professionals who are responsible for reporting the survey data that contribute to the rankings and are also called upon to explain the outcomes. This discussion group will explore strategies for effectively managing campus conversations when rankings are released, including how to address questions from leadership, faculty, and other stakeholders. Participants are encouraged to share their own experiences and approaches in navigating the challenges and opportunities rankings present. Attendees will leave with tools to foster productive, data-informed discussions that align rankings with broader institutional goals and priorities.

Presenter(s): Nancy DeRiggi

Peer Institutions for Benchmarking Analysis for University System
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Decision Support

What is a Peer Institution and how do I decide which institutions are my peers? Every higher education institution can benefit from identifying peer institutions, which can be referenced for a variety of tasks such as benchmarking, strategic planning, and goal-setting. Peers can be defined a number of ways, and this presentation reviews the recent Peer Study revision at the University of North Carolina System Office, a strong and diverse public higher education system that enrolls ~250k students at 16 universities. The UNC System has more than $2.2 billion in research expenditures and campuses that serve every region of North Carolina including six HBCUs and HMSIs and a university for visual and performing arts. One of the largest challenges was developing decision criteria that would be equitable across the system while ensuring that individual university missions were incorporated. An evaluation of the existing methodology, peer list, and revision will be presented.

Presenter(s): Giana J. Malak

Practical Uses of ChatGPT in Institutional Research Tasks
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Technology & Tools

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly large language models like ChatGPT, presents transformative opportunities in higher education, especially for institutional research (IR). This presentation explores how AI can streamline key tasks in the IR office including structuring responses to ad hoc requests; validating required reports; generating innovative strategies to enhance student retention and satisfaction; and aiding various decision-making processes. In addition, ChatGPT can serve as a programming assistant, helping researchers write SQL snippets or SAS code efficiently, reducing time spent on technical tasks, and enabling teams to focus on strategic objectives. By integrating AI tools into IR, professionals can elevate their ability to manage complex data, generate insights, and drive improvements, all while saving time and resources. This session will delve into practical applications of AI in these areas, providing examples and strategies for its implementation. Contributing Authors: Yaseen Al-Wesabi and Meng Chen – Binghamton University

Presenter(s): YASEEN M. AL-WESABI

Quick Insights, Big Impact: Leveraging Pulse Surveys and AI
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Assessment & Evaluation

Pulse surveys—regularly asking brief questions to monitor sentiment—have become commonly used tools in user-experience research. This session will delve into the implementation of a two-item pulse survey to assess net promoter sentiment, integrate demographic data, and inform assessment practices, leadership briefings, and institutional transformation initiatives. Attendees will gain practical knowledge on launching pulse surveys, understanding their benefits over traditional methods, and using them to monitor trends, equity, and inclusiveness across the academic year. Additionally, the session will highlight the integration of AI tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, and Relative Insight to enhance qualitative analysis, offering a glimpse into the future of AI-driven assessment. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to leverage pulse surveys and AI for timely, data-informed campus improvements.

Presenter(s): Simran Kaur; Ahmed Belazi; Robert Miller

Sense of Belonging: Using the National Survey of Student Engagement
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Research & Policy

Students' sense of belonging at their college is a significant factor in persistence. Using survey data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) for multivariate analysis, this study examines some of the most salient features of a campus environment from the student perspective that contribute to their overall sense of belonging on campus, specifically in the context of a single-purpose health sciences institution. A canonical correlation analysis finds that a student's perceptions of their campus environment based on three specific engagement indicators can significantly predict their overall sense of belonging in college. In this study, students who (1) perceive that their college places a major emphasis on providing all kinds of academic and extracurricular support; (2) have experienced positive interactions with both their peers and a wide variety of campus employees; and (3) view their instructors as effective teachers tend to feel a more powerful sense of belonging.

Presenter(s): Susannah W. Townsend

The Impact of Student-to-Faculty Ratio on Graduation Rate
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Decision Support

The present study focused on the impact of the student-to-faculty ratio (SFR) on student success. It has been widely believed that low SFR means more one-on-one time with instructors, and students tend to receive more individualized attention and hands-on learning experiences. These benefits can further improve student success. This is an important topic for research because a low SFR limits the available resources in other areas. Utilizing IPEDS data on the entering cohort of 2016 freshmen and SFR over the six years from 2016 to 2021, we examined the impact of SFR on the six-year graduation rate. The result shows that although there appears to be a significant simple correlation between a high graduation rate and low SFR, with entering student test scores controlled, SFR no longer shows a significant impact. We further analyzed this impact among different types of institutions. Contributing Authors: Ben Liu – Florida Atlantic University

Presenter(s): Ying Liu; Zhiyuan Ma

The Power of Early Data: Forecasting Academic Outcomes Prematriculation
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Assessment & Evaluation

How can institutions leverage prematriculation data to better serve students? This question, universal to all institutions, will guide our presentation. We will begin by discussing why properly identifying students who are likely to struggle in the classroom is crucial for delivering effective academic support. Next, we will outline how traditional approaches often rely on broad categories (e.g., first-generation students or Pell recipients), often misidentifying students who would thrive without additional support. These categorizations may also reinforce harmful narratives about students from certain backgrounds. To address these limitations, we developed a novel process using prematriculation data that exclude demographic variables to better identify first-year students who are most in need of support. In this session, we will share how our process, developed in collaboration with university partners, has informed more targeted and effective student support strategies.

Presenter(s): Connor D. O'Rear; Mary Tarsha

Then and Now: The Evolving Role of the IR Analyst in This AI Era
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Leadership & Career Development

The role of the IR analyst has evolved significantly over the past decade, driven by technological advancements and shifting methodologies. While traditional tasks like descriptive statistics and federal reporting remain important, modern analysts are increasingly expected to leverage advanced analytics to inform strategic decision-making. This session will explore the evolving landscape of the IR analyst role in the age of AI. Presenters will discuss effective prompting techniques that IR analysts can use to optimize their AI usage. Attendees will gain valuable insights into the profession's future and learn practical tips for harnessing generative AI to enhance their work.

Presenter(s): Bethany Crowell; Adam Caskie

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM

Lost in Translation: How to Speak Effectively With Your IT Unit(s)
Panel Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

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Have you ever found yourself misunderstood by your IT colleagues? Or possibly you misunderstood them? How best to overcome the jargon, expertise, and approach gap between IT and business units such as IR? The data lifecycle begins far before IR staff extract, analyze, and visualize data for decision-makers. At the same time, the need for collaboration and understanding each other's perspectives is more significant than ever with the increasing need for data integration, real- or near-real-time access to data, and the growing number of data-savvy end users. The IT world can seem mysterious to many on the business side of the house. This panel of experts seeks to demystify interactions with your IT colleagues. They will share their most significant challenges and how they sought to narrow the gap between business and IT and ultimately enhanced their data literacy, this time from the perspective of IT.

Presenter(s): Allison La Tarte; Rachel Groenhout; Ivana Fredotovic; Melissa Barnett

Supplementing IR Work Using Student Workers, Graduate Assistants, and Faculty
Panel Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Leadership & Career Development

This panel discusses the role of student workers, graduate assistants, and faculty in supporting and supplementing the work of IR offices. Each of these three group comes to IR work with their own unique strengths and limitations, but the ability to utilize this type of assistance may be critical to your own IR office's ability to expand its portfolio of support for the larger institution. In this session, representatives from a wide range of institutions (from community colleges to doctoral institutions) and IR staff sizes (ranging from 1 FTE to large IR offices) will discusses their experiences and recommendations for getting the most out of these types of workers.

Presenter(s): Eric Godin; Kristin Buscher; Scott Parke; Omarhiyon Malcolm

11:40 AM - 12:00 PM

From IPEDS to AI: Let's Talk Shop
Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Expo Theater 2 | Research & Policy

As part of Watermark's goal of connecting our clients to experts in the field, we are bringing two strong voices in the IR world together for a fun panel conversation. Discussing IPEDS as a process and an artifact, understanding the impact of AI on IR, and exploring how IR offices should pivot to stay relevant in turbulent times are some of the topics we will cover.

Presenter(s): Glenn Phillips; Caroline Mata; Yesenia Espinal

Intergrated Program Review with Precision Campus
Sponsor Product Demonstration | Expo Theater 1 | Assessment & Evaluation

The Precision Campus Integrated Program Review Tool combines faculty responses with key performance measures and dashboards. Colleges can create their own templates or questionnaires for academic program review and other survey collection needs. In each of these, the templates may contain embedded Precision Campus reports providing the information needed to answer specific questions. For example, the program director for Accounting will have a question about enrollment trends over the past five years. Next to that question the director will see a data table and chart showing enrollment trends in Accounting. Different questions will have different reports, all set up to assist the faculty in filling out the form. Finally, the administrator can summarize and export all of the responses.

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Presenter(s): Eric Spear; Wyntre Stout

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Lunch break, poster presentations, and networking in the Exhibit Hall (food for purchase)
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K | Lunch Break

Grab-and-go options for purchase will be in the Exhibit Hall on Wednesday, May 21, and Thursday, May 22. Be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there!

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

AI Versus A University Professor: A Grading Interrater Reliability Study
Poster Presentation | Poster 15 | Decision Support

This session explores the findings of a study comparing the interrater reliability between an AI system and a university professor in grading academic work. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into education, understanding how its assessments align with human evaluators is crucial. The study examines the consistency of grades assigned by both AI and a professor in an undergraduate research methods course, highlighting areas of agreement and discrepancy. Key factors such as grading rubrics, subjectivity in evaluation, and biases are analyzed to determine the strengths and limitations of AI in replicating or complementing human judgment. Attendees will gain insights into the potential for AI to enhance grading efficiency and fairness, while also addressing challenges in ensuring academic integrity and rigor. The session will provoke discussion on the future role of AI in education and its implications for teaching, learning, and assessment practices.

Presenter(s): Mitchell S. Nesler

AI-Powered Visuals for Advancing Data-Informed Insights in Higher Education
Poster Presentation | Poster 27 | Technology & Tools

This poster presentation will showcase the use of AI-driven visuals in higher education analytics, focusing on tools like Power BI's Key Influencers and Tableau's Explain Data. Attendees will discover how these visuals can reveal insights into student success, enrollment trends, and institutional performance. This session is essential for institutional researchers and administrators seeking practical tools to enhance data-informed decision-making. Participants will learn to implement AI-driven visuals for improved data interpretation and reporting. Objectives include demonstrating real-world applications of AI visuals, providing hands-on demonstrations, and encouraging discussions on integrating these tools into current practices. Attendees will leave equipped to leverage AI-driven analytics for effective storytelling in their institutions.

Presenter(s): Emma Zhu

Data Science and CIP Codes
Poster Presentation | Poster 1 | Assessment & Evaluation

Data Science is one of the fastest growing majors. In 2020, NCES issued new CIP codes for Data Science and Data Visualization. But prior to the introduction of these new CIP codes, data analytics, along with

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computer science and statistics have embedded data science skills within their descriptions. This poster presentation will showcase text mining of the 2020 CIP Codes to identify additional codes that have embedded data science and data analytics skills. Additionally, degree completions will be examined to identify where there are strong programs and skills associated with job outcomes.

Presenter(s): Melinda M. Whitford

Enhancing Academic Success Through Data-Driven Insights
Poster Presentation | Poster 3 | Assessment & Evaluation

This study explores student success in terms of retention and graduation rates at the course level using data science and machine learning, an important topic in higher education. A case study from Binghamton University demonstrates how predictive models identified course combinations that promote success (GPA ≥ 3.0). Key insights include identifying high-risk courses and departments where students face challenges. Recommendations include interventions like interdisciplinary learning communities, curriculum adjustments, and early alert systems. This session is ideal for those seeking to apply data-driven insights to improve academic outcomes, enhance retention, and foster continuous improvement. Participants will gain practical tools and strategies to implement these methods at their institutions. Objectives: (1) apply predictive models to identify course combinations improving student outcomes and high-risk areas and (2) explore actionable intervention strategies to support success. Contributing Authors: Meng Chen – State University of New York at Binghamton

Presenter(s): Dennis C. Ikpe

From Data to Decisions: Leveraging Tableau Prep for Institutional Success
Poster Presentation | Poster 11 | Decision Support

This poster presentation will cover Tableau Prep's importance and data management capabilities through an applied example. The session will focus on the importance of data documentation, governance, and practical applications of enhanced data cleaning methods. This is particularly valuable for attendees seeking a helpful, sustainable solution for managing and cleaning data from multiple sources. Tableau Prep is especially useful for appending and updating data periodically, which aligns with the needs of various IR/IE offices and organizations that handle data. The presentation objective will be to demonstrate how Tableau Prep is a suitable solution for data management and faster analysis. Ultimately, the attendee will have learned Tableau Prep and how it can be utilized for improved long-term data projects. Attendees will gain enhanced data-cleaning skills and practical knowledge to apply to their work.

Presenter(s): Destiny Tisdale

Honoring Diversity: How Flexibility and Transparency in Admissions Matters
Poster Presentation | Poster 23 | Research & Policy

This poster session presents findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), investigating whether honors participation overall, and honors testing and admissions policies specifically, are predictors of diverse discussions. This study uses responses from the core NSSE survey and the Honors Education consortium, given to 38,935 students at 22 institutions. A series of regression

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models suggests that honors participation is a positive predictor of discussions with diverse others. Looking within honors participants, additional regression models suggest that more flexible admissions policies, such as later entry points and qualitative criteria, are positive predictors of diverse discussions, whereas a lack of transparency related to admissions policies is generally a negative predictor. Understanding of these differences can help institutions determine the effectiveness of various admissions policies in terms of encouraging diverse interactions. Contributing Authors: C. H. Kevin Lee – University of South Florida

Presenter(s): Amber D. Dumford; Angie Miller

Increasing Stakeholder Utilization of Data Dashboards
Poster Presentation | Poster 29 | Technology & Tools

IR offices are often tasked with displaying and sharing data effectively. The IR offices at sister schools of nursing were able to utilize data dashboards built using Power BI and other software to more effectively share data within and outside of the institutions. Census data, including ethnicity/race, gender, program, department, and total credits, as well as admissions data including previous institution, number of applications, city of applicants, and ethnicity/race of applicants, have helped leadership, faculty, staff, and stakeholders have a better understanding of the colleges of nursing respectively. In less than one year, leadership has consistently drawn on the data displays to show and talk about census and admissions data for the institution. This standardization has helped the institutions share statistics consistently.

Presenter(s): Jennifer Larson

It's October: Do You Know How Your Students Are Doing?
Poster Presentation | Poster 7 | Assessment & Evaluation

October is a critical time for college students, particularly for first-year students who are adjusting to the academic and personal demands of higher education. Often, IR offices are tasked with deploying and reporting results of midsemester "pulse" surveys during this period. However, many institutions also have preenrollment survey data on these same students. This session will present research results using a preenrollment and pulse survey from a large national sample addressing two major concerns that impact student success: mental health and finances. The results show that the relationship between preenrollment survey data and midsemester pulse survey data is not perfectly linear, however it does successfully identify many students who later in the semester express concerns about mental health and finances. The session will also include discussion regarding the role of IR offices and midsemester pulse and preenrollment surveys.

Presenter(s): James Cole

Leveraging Data Scaffolding to Improve Data-Driven Decision-Making
Poster Presentation | Poster 33 | Technology & Tools

This session introduces data scaffolding as a powerful solution for overcoming common challenges faced by Institutional Research (IR) professionals, including incomplete data, poorly structured data that hide insights, and missing data for specific requirements. Through a practical, real-world project example, the

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session demonstrates how data scaffolding addresses these issues by filling gaps, restructuring datasets for clearer insights, and ensuring appropriate data access for various stakeholders. Attendees will explore key use cases of data scaffolding, using visuals and examples to learn how to apply these techniques to enhance their data analysis and visualization skills. By leveraging the principles of data scaffolding, participants will be equipped to address a variety of data challenges and generate actionable insights for informed decision-making in Institutional Research.

Presenter(s): Yan Li

Overcoming Academic and Career Barriers for Single-Parent Students in STEM
Poster Presentation | Poster 19 | Research & Policy

Our project investigates the experiences of single-parent students in STEM fields. This population has been paid less attention in academic and IR professions. In collaboration with and advised by NCES Data Institute 2024, we used data from Baccalaureate and Beyond to examine the degree completion of single-parent students in STEM, their persistence in STEM careers after graduation, and their gross income in early-mid careers. Our findings indicate that single-parent students encounter barriers to success in STEM degrees due to managing multiple responsibilities, such as academic commitments, employment, and financial hardships. These issues are directly tied to core areas of institutional research, including student success, retention, and equity. Our study emphasizes the need to address the challenges and inequities in STEM major choice, persistence, and economic stability for single-parent students in STEM.

Presenter(s): Yizhi Zhu; Xilin Zhang

Postsecondary Experiences for First-Generation First-Time Freshmen in Georgia
Poster Presentation | Poster 21 | Research & Policy

This session explores enrollment trends of first-generation college students (FGCS) among first-time freshmen enrolled in the 26 public universities of the University System of Georgia from Fall 2019 to Fall 2023. We examine FGCS's educational and background characteristics, academic preparation, academic performance, and individual and family resources, comparing them with continuing-generation college students (CGCS). Participants will gain insights into unique personal and contextual challenges and barriers FGCS face compared to CGCS in terms of access, performance, and retention in college within the University System of Georgia.

Presenter(s): Yanling Ma; Leslie Hodges

Student Success and Mid-First-Semester Check-In Survey
Poster Presentation | Poster 9 | Decision Support

By conducting mid-first-semester surveys, we intend to determine student plans for Spring semester and gauge students' overall sense of well-being, involvement, and academic engagement. We also conduct outreach to support and retain students who are experiencing academic/personal challenges and students who are likely to leave.

Presenter(s): Melaku Woube

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The Readmission Landscape: Readmission Policy in Four-Year Institutions
Poster Presentation | Poster 17 | Research & Policy

There is significant focus on initial entry into, and retention at, the postsecondary level—but what about the students that leave? How can institutions make it as simple as possible for their students to return after extended time away? This poster session presents a broad-scale review of the undergraduate readmission-policy landscape at almost 50 four-year institutions. Topics covered include systems of policy implementation; contours of the terms, guidelines, and requirements of these policies; and a comparative analysis of these items at AAU vs. nonAAU institutions.

Presenter(s): Katherine C. Gipalo

The Role of Generative AI in Academic Writing: Implications and Impacts
Poster Presentation | Poster 25 | Research & Policy

Generative AI tools are increasingly influencing course assessments in higher education, offering both opportunities and challenges, though their full impact is unclear. To explore this, we surveyed over 2,700 students across 24 institutions about their use of AI in writing assignments and whether instructors provided guidance on acceptable use. While most students had not yet used AI for coursework, about 1 in 10 did so frequently. AI use was more common among students with lower grades and aspirations and was linked to the amount of writing, cocurricular activities, socializing, and work. It was negatively associated with effective learning strategies like reviewing notes. AI users were more likely to complete tasks involving numerical data or writing for specific audiences, like politicians or employers. This study will explore the integration of AI in writing assignments and its impact on assessing student engagement.

Presenter(s): Robert M. Gonyea; Malik M. Wali Awan

Two-Phase Post-Stratified Sequential Sampling to Address Nonresponse Bias
Poster Presentation | Poster 5 | Assessment & Evaluation

Nowadays, online surveys are an increasingly popular form of survey research that are usually suffering from the nonresponse bias. We developed a new technique named "Two-phase Post-Stratified Sequential Sampling (TPSS) design" to deal with the nonresponse bias and comparing this technique with simple random sample for a study where the link of a questionnaire is sent to all members of the population by email. This sampling method is developed to be used in surveys where every member has an institutional email. The design has features that can control the nonresponse bias and guarantees large enough observations from each subpopulation in order to run a valid statistical analysis at the subpopulations level. An unbiased estimator and an approximate variance estimator are introduced. Using a simulation study, we show that the sampling design is more efficient than conventional sampling designs. We also provide some guidelines on sampling sizes at the end.

Presenter(s): Fatima Shaban Ali

Why the Difference? Matriculation Rates of Concurrent Enrollment Students
Poster Presentation | Poster 13 | Decision Support

The setting is a small, rural community college that serves a geographic area of 20,000 square miles with under 90,000 population and 35 high schools. Analysis of matriculation rates by high school indicated a large gap between rates at the two larger high schools and the high schools with the six next-largest concurrent enrollments. As a part of the Harvard Strategic Data Project Fellowship, presenters went through a collaborative process of identifying prospective factors, collecting and formatting data for analysis, and creating data visualizations and stories. The audience can expect to learn about the process and results of the research project used to inform decision support for enrollment and recruiting decision makers.

Presenter(s): Robert Merchant; Tad Pfeifer

1:30 PM - 1:50 PM

Leverage Instant Access to Thousands of U.S. News Metrics & Historical Data
Sponsor Product Demonstration | Expo Theater 1 | Decision Support

Save time on data collection and management by powering your dashboards and reports through Academic Insights. Elevate the conversation with your leadership by providing the detailed and historical context behind institutional movement. Keep up with data and ranking updates in real time and ensure accurate data across institutions. Stop by to see our team demonstrate why college and university administrators use Academic Insights for benchmarking and institutional data reporting across internal programs and peer schools, and how they align their institution's goals and priorities with data driven insights and decisions.

Presenter(s): Jessica Locklear; Patricia Xavier-Burns; Chloe Farmer

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

AIR Annual Business Meeting
Panel Session | Sebastian I3 |

The Annual Business Meeting of the association is scheduled at each year's Forum and all AIR members are invited to attend. The meeting is led by the current Board of Directors and attended by newly elected Board members as well. The Annual Report of the Board of Directors is released at the meeting to provide an overview of Board activities in the previous year. Also included is the official count of membership, election results, and the Board Treasurer's report to the membership about the association's financial position. Board members will answer questions and discuss future plans for AIR.

Presenter(s): Debbie Phelps; Karen Vance; Eric Atchison; Christine Keller

How Holistic Data Integration Is Transforming Higher Education
Panel Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Technology & Tools

By viewing students as unique individuals striving to advance, institutions can leverage AI to enhance support and outcomes in more holistic ways. This panel presentation will explore how AI, particularly in data integration and mentoring, can reshape the student experience through the lens of a case study of a pilot program between WGU and Doowii. Experts from higher education and AI will share how institutions can implement scalable AI solutions that not only reduce the complexity of adoption but also democratize access to data, enabling institutions to support students beyond the classroom. Attendees

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will walk away with an understanding of the potential of AI to match students' drive with tailored support, and how institutions can revolutionize how they engage with students as whole individuals. Join us for an in-depth look at how AI is paving the way for more effective and empathetic support systems in higher education.

Presenter(s): Ben Dodson; Bethany Gross

Student Satisfaction: Gather and Use Data to Impact the Student Experience
Panel Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Decision Support

Student satisfaction surveys are a key component in assessing and ensuring the quality of the student experience. They allow institutions to understand student priorities and to target resources accordingly. To be most effective, institutions need strong response rates, a plan to review and respond to the feedback plus good collaboration with leadership. Representatives from four-year and two-year institutions will share how they are effectively gathering and using their student satisfaction data, providing examples of what is working. This session will share the perspectives of the panelists and the moderator to identify how campuses can successfully use student satisfaction survey results.

Presenter(s): Julie L. Bryant; Heather Rondeau; Kaylyn Hansen; Roxianne Snodgrass

1:45 PM - 2:30 PM

(Power) Automate Your Life
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Technology & Tools

Spending too much time on repetitive tasks? We'll explore how Power Automate can help reduce manual work and streamline processes through automation. We'll cover the basics, including cloud and desktop flows, process mining, and integration with tools like PowerBI and SharePoint. Real-life use cases will demonstrate how automating routine tasks like email handling, file synchronization, and data collection can enhance productivity and ensure timely delivery of results. Whether you're new to automation or looking to optimize your workflows, this session will equip you with practical knowledge to apply automation in your daily work. In this session, you will (1) understand how Power Automate can reduce errors and improve efficiency; (2) learn the key features and tools available within Power Automate; and (3) gain insight into practical use cases and templates you can implement immediately. Join us to discover how automation can transform your work, leaving more time to focus on what matters.

Presenter(s): Rick Loveday

Academic Burnout and Stress Management
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Assessment & Evaluation

Graduate students face unique pressures, with research showing a significant proportion experiencing high levels of academic stress and burnout during their programs. Such stress is linked to declining mental health, increased dropout rates, and lower academic performance. This investigation explores how academic and institutional factors influence burnout and stress management among graduate students, as well as their impact on well-being and academic success. Using data from the gradSERU 2024 survey, which includes responses from 33,739 graduate students across 14 research universities in

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the United States, the study employs structural equation modeling to predict the effects of academic, financial, and emotional stressors on burnout and stress management. The research provides evidence for universities to address these issues and create interventions to prevent stress and burnout. Findings will offer insights for institutional stakeholders to enhance student well-being and academic success. Contributing Authors: David Daleke – Indiana University Bloomington

Presenter(s): Ozgur Kayaalp; Ishika Thakur

An Adaption Guide: Using Power BI in a Postsecondary World
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Decision Support

Hear a story of how one IR office went from a disinterest in Power BI (to put it mildly) to wondering how it ever lived without it, using just a campus-wide Pro license and uploaded Excel spreadsheets. If you are new to IR, new to Power BI, or simply looking for different ways to present data from sources such as IPEDS, NSSE, and U.S. News & World Report, learn how Power BI can become an essential, reliable, and appreciated part of your department, and take away examples (such as snippets of DAX code) to help get you started.

Presenter(s): Sarah Dunnagan

Artificial Intelligence 101: What Texas IR Practitioners Need to Know
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Panzacola H3 | Technology & Tools

Whether you work in Texas or another State how much do you really know about Artificial Intelligence? This sessions provides (as much as is possible) a current view of the landscape and how IR professionals can best navigate this rapidly changing world. We will discuss mindsets, tips, tricks, and both organizational and ethical concerns related to AI and Natural Language Processing. You will leave this session with at least 5 ways AI can help you do your job more effectively. This session received the Best Session Award at TAIR 2024.

Presenter(s): Jason F. Simon

Breaking Down Data Silos: Improving Collaboration, Data Quality, and Access
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

Data silos present significant challenges for organizations, especially in educational institutions where information is often dispersed across multiple systems. These silos occur when departments manage their data independently, leading to redundancy, poor communication, and integration issues. As a result, valuable insights can become isolated, hindering effective decision-making. In this presentation, we will discuss how UIC's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) piloted a data virtualization tool to enhance data sharing for surveys across various campus units within a decentralized environment. The virtualized survey responses were integrated with Enterprise and other internal data sources, allowing curated data to be shared with campus units. This approach granted appropriate permissions, enabling them to generate reports and visualizations without navigating the complexities of diverse data sources or storing the data locally.

Presenter(s): Saleha Rizvi

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Data Synergy: Building Bridges Between Institutional Research and IT
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Unlocking the full potential of data in higher education requires robust collaboration between Institutional Research (IR) and Information Technology (IT) departments. However, a persistent mindset gap often stifles this partnership, leaving valuable insights untapped. In this discussion group, we will explore the distinct priorities of IR and IT, addressing common misconceptions that fuel the divide. Participants will share real-world experiences and successful strategies for fostering effective liaisons and enhancing communication. Together, we will examine collaborative tools that facilitate data sharing and drive innovation. Attendees will depart with actionable practices and fresh perspectives, empowering them to transform their institutions' data-driven decision-making. Join us in reshaping the future of analytics in higher education through meaningful collaboration!

Presenter(s): Melissa L. Baker

Further Unpacking the 2025 Carnegie Classifications
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Assessment & Evaluation

The Carnegie Classifications have been the nation's leading framework in understanding and organizing American higher education institutions since 1973. To keep pace with the evolving and rapidly diversifying higher education landscape, the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching began a partnership in February 2022 to reimagine the Carnegie Classifications. In spring 2025, we introduced the new classification system. In this session, Carnegie Classifications leaders will share the context for the approach to the 2025 Carnegie Classifications, how the classifications work, and what is planned for the future. We will also share initial observations on these updates and how they will inform our ongoing work to better reflect the breadth of higher education institutions and their public purpose, mission, focus, and impact.

Presenter(s): Sara Gast; Kyle Whitman

HR Compensation Dashboard: A Tool for Equity and Retention
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Decision Support

This session will cover the development and application of an interactive HR Compensation Analytics Dashboard. The dashboard enables real-time compensation analysis and informs strategic decision-making to retain top talent. It provides insights into salary distributions, employee demographics, progression trends, and equitable pay practices, helping institutions address compensation equity challenges. Attendees will learn how data visualization tools like Power BI, built upon a Snowflake data warehouse, can transform institutional practices, ensuring competitive and equitable compensation structures. Notably, this dashboard won second place in the regional SAIR awards competition for best interactive report. The session is highly relevant for institutional researchers, HR professionals, and decision-makers focused on staff retention and compensation strategies.

Presenter(s): Richard L. Howell; Heather Epstein-Diaz; Eclipse Ramsey I

Inclusive Counts: Critical Data Analysis, Data Quality, and Dissemination
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Decision Support

Institutional research and assessment that uses quantitative data faces many challenges in ensuring that data practices are equitable and inclusive. Critical approaches to quantitative data challenge traditional models, measures, and analytic processes often used in traditional quantitative research. Although a critical lens can allow us to better find areas of inequity, these approaches can be met with skepticism and misunderstandings. Participants in this session will learn about critical quantitative inquiry and how it can apply to four different areas of IR decision-making: data collection, data analysis, assessing data quality, and dissemination of results. We will discuss critiques of traditional assumptions and uses of quantitative data, look at examples for how we can apply critical approaches to our work, and learn about challenges we should anticipate when using critical quantitative inquiry in IR decision-making and in sharing critically derived results with others.

Presenter(s): Allison BrckaLorenz

Key Accreditation Support Software in One Dynamic But Simple System
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Assessment & Evaluation

Xitracs is a user-friendly, cost-effective software platform that allows your IR/E staff, other campus leaders, and users-at-large to streamline work related to learning outcomes assessment, institutional effectiveness reporting, program review, strategic planning, faculty/staff credentialing, agency accreditation activities, grant management, AI integration options, and more! This presentation will give an overview of how Xitracs supports success and continuous improvement in these key areas. We will wrap up the session with time for your questions and input.

Presenter(s): Stephanie Allen

Preparing for Change: Key Considerations for Restructuring and Realignment
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Decision Support

During significant institutional, school, or departmental transformations, such as mergers, splits, or strategic realignments, Institutional Research (IR) offices play a pivotal role in helping to ensure continuity of mission and services. This session dives into how IR professionals can effectively manage and report on data during these complex transitions. Drawing on the example of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), which recently underwent a major restructuring to split into two independent institutions, we will explore practical steps and strategies to ensure a smooth transition, such as coordinating data-sharing between institutions, adapting to changes in IPEDS reporting requirements, and maintaining the accuracy of longitudinal metrics. Attendees will gain actionable insights on navigating these challenges, helping to ensure seamless continuity of services at their institutions.

Presenter(s): Jesse Talley; Norma Fewell; Cassie Grove

Stepping In and Stepping Up: Leading in the Interim
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 2 | Leadership & Career Development

Changes in leadership can lead to disruptions to offices that might range from complete turnover of staff to a minor inconvenience to operations. We often see institutions appoint an acting or interim leader to "keep the ship afloat," providing a temporary fix for a complicated challenge. In this discussion group, the facilitators will discuss their recent experience serving as the interim leader for their respective IR offices and offer perspectives on framing and navigating the "interim" situation. The discussion will address topics covering succession planning, leading through uncertainty, key challenges and successes, and lessons learned.

Presenter(s): Jason L. Wang; Ben Bond

Timing Matters: Spring Enrollment, Belonging, and Student Outcomes
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Research & Policy

Most institutions admit first time in college (FTIC) students almost exclusively for the fall semester, even though there are additional seats available in the spring due to December graduation, transfers, and study abroad. More institutions are starting to purposively admit FTIC students for the spring semester. However, there is little research on these students and their outcomes. We use nationally representative data from the Beginning Postsecondary Longitudinal Study to examine this phenomenon with a focus on both the initial sense of belonging as well as the outcomes of retention, persistence, and attainment. Our analysis suggests that FTIC students who first enrolled in the spring semester were less likely to feel a sense of belonging and tended to have poorer outcomes that those who were first enrolled in the fall semester.

Presenter(s): Josh Pretlow

Unlock the Power of Data: Accelerate Your Institution's Effectiveness
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 6 | Technology & Tools

In today's rapidly evolving higher education landscape, data has become a critical asset for driving institutional priorities. This session will explore how new approaches to data analytics, machine learning, and AI can help you overcome the challenges posed by outdated data infrastructures and unlock transformative insights, with a single source of at-the-ready strategic and operational modules throughout their administrative, academic and research portfolios.

Presenter(s): Rajiv Malhotra; Dallas Maddox; Amie Carobres

2:45 PM - 3:30 PM

Art or Science? Developing a Peer Group Using Cluster Analysis
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Assessment & Evaluation

Peer groups play a crucial role in higher education by helping institutions clarify their market positions, compare activities and outcomes with similar schools, and establish goals and benchmarks for management decisions. Developing a peer group is an art as well as a science. There are many approaches to developing a peer group. We propose hierarchical cluster analysis. This statistical technique must be applied with utmost caution. It involves making numerous judgments at every step, from selecting the appropriate population and variables to identifying outliers and choosing a linkage method. Our research is practical and thorough, incorporating an extensive literature review and in-

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person interviews. We will walk through each step of creating the current peer group at Connecticut College. We will also discuss how an updated peer group navigates through a series of channels before it is widely accepted at an institution.

Presenter(s): Sanjeewa Karunaratne

Assessing the Economic Outcomes of Community College Students
Speaker Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Assessment & Evaluation

As researchers analyzing after-college outcomes of students, we rely heavily on a myriad of data sources to gauge how students fare after attending our institutions and how to continuously improve. Increasingly, these data cover student employment, earnings, and other economic outcomes. However, data on students' economic outcomes are often messy and difficult to access, and institutions lack clear guidance on how to best utilize this information. In this session, presenters from the Research Institute at Dallas College will discuss how they developed a system to integrate multiple data sources to holistically assess student's postcompletion economic and academic success as part of a structured process within their institution. Using longitudinal data, first-destination surveys, qualitative data, and other sources, presenters will share a model of how Dallas College produces a rich understanding of student outcomes at a large community college that serves a diverse learner population.

Presenter(s): Navi Dhaliwal; David Mahan; McKenna Griffin

Beyond Citations: How AI Is Powering Africa's Research Renaissance
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Technology & Tools

As African universities strive for global research competitiveness, traditional citation metrics fall short in capturing the full scope of research impact. This study explores AI's potential to redefine research assessment across the continent's diverse higher education institutions. Using a mixed-methods approach, it integrates data from platforms like Altmetric, SciVal, and Dimensions with qualitative insights to develop a validated, AI-driven framework. The model employs NLP and ML to analyze bibliometric data, institutional repositories, social media, policy documents, and industry links. The research also centers Indigenous Knowledge (IK), decolonization, and Africanism, reflecting Africa's rich intellectual traditions. It introduces novel, inclusive, and context-specific research metrics that capture a broader impact-such as societal influence, Indigenous contributions, and innovation-offering a transformative and culturally relevant alternative to traditional evaluation systems. Contributing Authors: Mxolisi Masango – Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Presenter(s): Hossein Masoumi Karakani

Catching Subchange: Preventing Subchanges From Slipping Through the Cracks
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Assessment & Evaluation

Academic and support units are often siloed at colleges and universities, making it difficult for stakeholders to collaborate over substantive changes that must be reported to the triad. This session presents one institution's successful method for catching substantive changes and maintaining compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Standard 14.2. The session describes the policy and associated process and reviews components of the institution's

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substantive change policy for application in other contexts. The presentation will highlight substantive change teams, tools for organizing and archiving changes, and strategies stakeholders use not only to catch substantive changes before they slip through the cracks, but also, to ensure the changes the triad approves are implemented successfully at the institution.

Presenter(s): Rachel E. Smith

Compliance and Opportunity: IPEDS Data for Accreditation
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3

Preparation for accreditation reviews provides opportunities for institutions to harness information for planning and forward-thinking initiatives beyond compliance. Specifically, aligning IPEDS data with accreditation requirements and benchmarking with IPEDS data through the Compare Institutions Tool helps ensure that preparation for accreditation is part of a data-informed decision culture. This session will highlight key benchmarking areas (student enrollment, achievement, faculty/staff, and finances), provide a live demonstration of the Compare Institutions tool, and present example tables to help demonstrate compliance.

Presenter(s): Carolyn Mata

Creating Peer Groups That Serve a Purpose
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Decision Support

Institutional peer group development often falls under the purview of institutional research offices, though it is inherently an institution-wide initiative. Institutional stakeholders often try to use a single peer group for multiple purposes, from identifying aspirants to establishing faculty salary peers, leading many to question the veracity of these benchmarking efforts. Presenters from James Madison University will describe how they revised their peer group development process after changing Carnegie Classifications. Attendees will gain insights into their approach for crafting a comparative peer group and developing a toolkit for campus-wide groups to construct purpose-specific peer groups, facilitating effective benchmarking for decision-making. Contributing Authors: Stephanie Stevens, James Madison University

Presenter(s): Chris Orem

Deploying Secure RAG Systems: Generative AI for Higher Education
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Technology & Tools

This session delves into the University of Arizona's deployment of a Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) system, showcasing how generative AI can transform data access and decision-making in higher education. Key topics include organizing unstructured data, building vector databases, implementing semantic search, and optimizing prompt engineering. This session is crucial for those looking to deploy AI systems within their own institutions, offering insights into maintaining data privacy while enabling advanced applications. Attendees will explore real-world use cases, such as the ASK-KMAP research query tool, automated grant announcements, and an AI-powered news writing assistant. By the end, participants will understand how to harness RAG systems to improve research capabilities, streamline

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information access, and enhance decision-making processes at their institutions. The system is live at https://kmap.arizona.edu. Contributing Authors: Thomas Harman and Wesley Nguyen – University of Arizona

Presenter(s): Iqbal Hossain; Ravneet Chadha

Fast Facts: Reproducible Factbook Reporting in Quarto
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Technology & Tools

While Business Intelligence (BI) tools for data visualization and interactive reporting, exemplified by Power BI and Tableau, are immensely useful to IR offices, they have key limitations. Namely, cost, complexity, and confinement. Institutions facing budget cuts or with limited reporting capacity require reliable alternatives. Even institutions that do successfully integrate these BI tools into their work benefit from having a repertoire of tools to provide the information needed by a broad array of stakeholders. Cue the power of Quarto! This session will tangibly demonstrate how Colorado State University generates its annual Factbook through a reproducible, dynamic, and automated process in Quarto (via RStudio). Attendees will learn ways that Quarto can function as a substitute for, as well as a complement to, more expensive BI tools. As an open-source publishing system, Quarto can empower IR offices of all sizes to create easily digestible and accessible reports in a timely manner.

Presenter(s): Nicole Ross; Heather Novak

How to Implement Effective Data Governance on Your Campus
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Decision Support

Reliable data informs the decisions that shape the future of your institution and your students. But most schools struggle to translate their high volume of data into meaningful insights quickly. The backlog of ad hoc data requests has ripple effects across campus, limiting collaboration and slowing decisions. A holistic approach to data governance can help you overcome these challenges. In this interactive session, you'll learn five key principles to design and deliver effective data governance, discuss common challenges, and see examples from institutions who have managed this work successfully.

Presenter(s): Matt Feger

Institutional Research and Communications: From Obstacle to Opportunity
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Institutional researchers, accustomed to complexity and nuance, have often lamented their sometimes fraught relationship with institutional communications. Reading the latest glossy report from Comms, we turn to the page with the data and charts… and exclaim in dismay: "Why did they remove those critical caveats?" "Where are the sources?" "Oh No! Please not another donut chart!" If this sounds familiar, you are not alone. But help is here! This talk will review the challenges of combining IR and Comms and highlight an initiative at the University of Toronto that brought the two parties together. We collaborated on a website of branding guidelines and resources, including PowerPoint templates and style guides with chart and graph templates, as well as data visualization standards and best practices. We will discuss the process and share the branding guides and templates. Participants will be invited to explore how to approach similar collaborations at their own institutions.

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Presenter(s): Aurora Mendelsohn; Tony Gray

Keeping the Balls in the Air: Project Management Best Practices
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Leadership & Career Development

Join us for a collaborative discussion on the strategies, successes, and pitfalls that Institutional Research offices encounter while trying to juggle recurring projects, required reporting, and an endless cascade of ad hoc requests. In order to keep the projects moving, all IR offices need to establish strategies for project management starting with the "simple" act of receiving requests, assigning due dates and priorities, documenting communication with stakeholders, and recording notes about the final project. Managers from the division of Analytics and Integrated Planning at a large public university will share how they assign and track projects, communicate workloads and priorities across teams in the division, and prevent duplication of effort. Participants will have the opportunity to share their best (and worst!) practices and brainstorm solutions for issues that other institutions are facing.

Presenter(s): Lisa Sklar; Michelle Parente; Danae Barulich; Amanda Miller

Leveraging Program Economics Analysis for Strategic Decision-Making
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Decision Support

In higher education, where resources are constrained and demands constantly evolve, making informed decisions regarding program offerings, resource allocation, and strategic planning is paramount. At Virginia Tech, we have developed a data-driven analytic framework for evaluating academic programs called Program Economics Analysis (PEA), consisting of four key elements: instructional cost, workload measure, program revenue, and program economics. This session discusses PEA's methodologies, integration into decision-making frameworks, demos on our University DataCommons, and future directions. By leveraging PEA, institutions can illuminate curricular inefficiencies, optimize resource allocation, and enhance faculty productivity. Ultimately, PEA equips institutions to navigate challenges, optimize resources, and foster academic excellence.

Presenter(s): Kangyang Wang; Rob Hopkins

Long-Term Impacts of COVID-19 on College Outcomes
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Research & Policy

As higher education institutions rushed to implement online education during the COVID-19 pandemic, they had little information about the impact of this rapid adaption on student outcomes. While recent research has focused on the immediate impacts of remote learning, the impacts of the pandemic on longer-term outcomes like degree progression and graduation is unclear. It is also unclear how the effect of remote learning in the K-12 setting has affected college outcomes, and whether this effect will continue for future students. This presentation will examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on outcomes during the pandemic, as well as outcomes of students that entered higher education after the pandemic. We will use data from the UNC System, the NC Department of Instruction, and data on the amount of time spent in virtual and hybrid learning environments. We hope this study will serve as a template for other researchers and institutions in different settings. Contributing Authors: Renee Barger – University of North Carolina System Office; Caleb Rose – University of North Carolina System

Presenter(s): Mark Umbricht

One-Day Census Turnaround: Revolutionizing Fall Reporting at U of A
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

At the University of Arizona, the Fall Census Snapshot has evolved into a highly efficient, streamlined process, allowing us to complete and deliver critical data in just one day. Over the years, what once took eight weeks has been reduced to a single day through continuous fine-tuning, automation, and enhancing data sources. This session will explore the evolution of the fall census process, highlighting the numerous iterations and the concerted time and effort invested before the census date, which make this rapid turnaround possible. Participants will also learn strategies for improving their own reporting processes, making data more accessible, and using census data to foster cross-departmental collaboration and inform key decisions, from student retention to media communications.

Presenter(s): Rico Silva; Daisy Esquivel

Organizing IR, Data, and Analytics for Advancing Faculty Eminence
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Decision Support

This session focuses on building analytics capacity to advance faculty eminence. Presenters will describe what faculty eminence is, why it is an important area for IR professionals, and how it can advance an institution's IR, data, and analytics functions. Additionally, we describe (1) the development of a comprehensive, integrated data infrastructure to support the faculty eminence (retention, promotion, compensation, research, benchmarking, and strategic planning indicators); (2) how we collaborate with others to leverage analytics in a Matrix Network Model of IR; and (3) the studies and analytics an IR office can conduct to help advance faculty eminence and strategies for using data and analysis in support of improved faculty outcomes.

Presenter(s): Michele J. Hansen; Jay Johnson

Predicting College Completion Using PDP's First-Year Outcomes
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Research & Policy

The role of early outcome metrics in timely credential completion was analyzed using data from the Postsecondary Data Partnership. Using a large-scale, disaggregated sample of full-time fall starters from the 2016–2017 cohort, we investigated first-year credit completion ratio (CCR), first-year GPA, first-year credits earned, and persistence to the second year as key predictors of timely college completion. The session also delves into how these outcomes vary by demographic factors such as gender, race, and age at entry. We also conducted a logistic regression analysis to identify which early outcome metrics are the most robust predictors of timely completion within 100%, 150%, and 200% timeframes. This session will present the main findings of this research, providing attendees with valuable insights into how early outcomes can influence credential completion. By understanding these impacts, participants can develop strategies to potentially enhance college completion rates. Contributing Authors: Sarah Karamarkovich, National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

Presenter(s): Mohamed Ibrahim; Allyson Gardner; Marty Schmidt

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U.S. News Rankings: An Analytical Approach With Multivariate Calculus
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Decision Support

This session presents a new analytical model using multivariate calculus to examine the complexities of U.S. News rankings. Recent changes in ranking formulas have caused universities to experience shifts in standings without corresponding institutional changes. Traditional reverse engineering methods to analyze the ranking face challenges like incomplete data, unclear processes, and model instability. Our model focuses on key indicators that are accessible and reliable, using partial derivatives to analyze their impacts on overall rankings. Statistical techniques are applied to enhance the accuracy of the model based on the distribution of the data. By bypassing unreliable indicators, the model improves stability and effectiveness and offers more clarity and actionable insights for institutional planning. The presentation reviews traditional methods and demonstrates the model construction, ranking sensitivity analysis and discussion of how it can be adapted to other ranking systems.

Presenter(s): Eric Yang; Shujuan Wang

3:45 PM - 4:30 PM

A Framework for Multilevel Insights Using Student Feedback
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

In an era where student voice is paramount, harnessing feedback effectively can drive institutional improvement and enhance the educational experience. This presentation explores a comprehensive approach to analyzing and interpreting student feedback across multiple dimensions. We will delve into three key sources of insights: Student Satisfaction Survey, Student Support Services Committee, and Bi-annual Chat and Chew sessions with student leadership. Attendees will walk away with a structured framework for integrating diverse feedback mechanisms, enabling them to cultivate a responsive educational environment. Join us to discover how multilevel insights can transform student feedback into actionable strategies for institutional growth.

Presenter(s): James A. Ofori

Academic Excellence: Implementing and Managing a Faculty Credentials System
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Assessment & Evaluation

This session will focus on the strategic planning and execution of managing faculty credentials within educational institutions. Participants will learn how to create, manage, and integrate faculty credential data to enhance hiring processes, accreditation reporting, and academic quality assurance. The session will address the common challenges and share best practices to ensure smooth implementation.

Presenter(s): Melanie Simpson; Misty McFadden

Beyond the Survey: Where Real-Time Support Meets Long-Term Strategic Impact
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Decision Support

What if a survey could do more than collect data? What if it could connect students in real-time to the support they need while also providing insights to strengthen long-term student success initiatives?

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Addressing non-academic barriers such as food and housing insecurity is critical to improving student success at community colleges. To better understand these barriers and students' engagement with support services, Ozarks Technical Community College developed a dual-purpose survey to inform institutional planning and give students an immediate way to request assistance. Actionable insights from the survey have strengthened the college's culture of holistic, data-informed student care and encouraged innovation in removing barriers to student success.

Presenter(s): Misty D. Tollett; Matt Harris

Choosing Your Data Champion: Tableau Prep vs. Power Query
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Technology & Tools

In the ever-evolving landscape of data analytics, effective data preparation is crucial for deriving meaningful insights. This presentation delves into two prominent data preparation tools, Tableau Prep and Power Query, examining their functionalities, strengths, and limitations. Through a live demonstration, attendees will gain a better understanding of how each platform operates and how they can be leveraged to streamline data workflows in institutional research.

Presenter(s): Elizabeth A. Wakefield; Donyell Francis

Empowering Student Success Starts with Data-Literate Teams
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3

The 2024 AIR National Survey reveals that institutions continue to face significant challenges with data literacy—and they increasingly turn to Offices of IR/IE for support in building this capacity. One tangible way to help your institution improve data literacy is through the AIR Data Literacy Institute (DLI). This 12-week, collaborative learning experience supports a cohort of up to 30 participants from a variety of roles (faculty, advisors, administrators, and staff) who are directly involved in student learning, development, or support. DLI participants engage in hands-on training and complete group research projects focused on real institutional challenges. Join us in this session to explore the components of the DLI and how it can help enhance data literacy at your institution.

Presenter(s): Darlena Jones; Jason Lewis

Enrollment and Retention Dashboards Using Real-Time Data Synchronization
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Decision Support

In the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education, institutions face increasing pressure to enhance decision-making processes through data-driven insights. This session explores the journey to overcome the challenges in the effective implementation and utilization of a real-time, dynamic institutional enrollment and retention dashboard. In it, we will discuss the usefulness of real-time data synchronization to power dashboards; investing in the necessary infrastructure; ensuring data quality and integrity; and training administrators, faculty, and other stakeholders to use a data dashboard as a vital tool in making informed strategic decisions.

Presenter(s): Angel Radick; Christopher Petrie

Enrollment Crystal Ball: Projections Simplified and Sophisticated
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Decision Support

Accurately predicting fall enrollment is crucial for effective planning and decision-making in higher education. This session explores a range of methodological approaches to enrollment projections, from simple ratio models to advanced logistic regressions. We will discuss how ratio-based models offer quick insights and are ideal for short-term estimates, while more complex techniques, such as logistic regression, can factor in key variables like scholarship dollars to provide deeper, data-driven forecasts. Attendees will learn the pros and cons of each approach and how to choose the best model for their institution's specific needs. Join us to discover how institutions can refine their enrollment forecasts to better align with strategic goals and make more informed decisions.

Presenter(s): Sasha B. Haywood; Bridgett Milner

Gain insight on students with trusted data from Equifax
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Decision Support

This session aims to empower institutional researchers with the knowledge and strategies to leverage verified wage and credit data as a vital tool for institutional advancement in the evolving higher education landscape. This session addresses the challenges institutional researchers face due to increased accountability and focus on equity. It explores using verified wage and credit data to measure student outcomes, enhance equity, and inform program evaluation. Attendees will learn how this data can improve career services, alumni engagement, and accreditation reporting. The session provides actionable steps for implementation, empowering researchers to leverage data for institutional advancement.

Presenter(s): Jason Berman; Brandi Recker

Increasing Your Impact: Best Practices in PDF Reports Accessibility
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

In the growing world of dashboarding in IR, PDF publications, such as reports or Fact Books, are not always getting the love they need to be most impactful. Uploading or otherwise sharing digital versions of PDF publications can increase their reach, however, this presents new digital accessibility challenges. This presentation will cover an introduction to Universal Design, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, considerations in font and color styling, and other accessibility guidelines. The majority of the time will be spent reviewing digital accessibility tools and recommendations in Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF documents through an example file. We will also demonstrate how to check ease of navigation using a free screen reading software, NVDA, and why optimizing PDF reports for screen readers is important.

Presenter(s): Gene Cilluffo; Cassandra Kepple; Logan Poland

3:45 PM - 4:30 PM

Optimizing Math-Seat Projections: A Model Using Placement and Retake Data
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Decision Support

This program is subject to change. Visit airweb.org/forumapp for the most current and complete listing

This session introduces a math-course seat-projection model used by Rutgers-Newark to make early decisions on the number of course sections and instructors needed. The model accounts for varying math requirements across majors and differing levels of student preparedness upon enrollment. It also considers course retakes for students who fail, using placement data, retake statistics, and student persistence to project seat demand. Attendees will gain insights into the model's key components, accuracy, and practical implementation, helping to optimize course offerings and staffing decisions.

Presenter(s): Chengbo Yin; Deborah Takash; Olivia Polkuzio

Optimizing Student Success: Data-Driven Analysis of Gateway Course Pairings
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Assessment & Evaluation

This report examines course combinations at a college, focusing on student performance across 9,931 combinations in gateway courses like ENG 101, MATH 216, and PSY 101 at Harford Community College. Topics include popular course pairings, Quality Point Averages (QPA), success metrics like pass and withdrawal rates, and the impact of specific course combinations on academic outcomes. The analysis is vital for educators, advisors, and administrators aiming to improve student success by identifying trends and key performance factors. The report's objective is to guide course planning, curriculum adjustments, and academic advising to enhance overall student achievement in gateway courses.

Presenter(s): Nick LaBella

Prosperity for Ohio: Mapping Academic and Workforce Outcomes
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Decision Support

Learn how the Prosperity for Ohio initiative is linking state higher education data with state employment data to track education to workforce outcomes and strengthen data-informed decision-making among community colleges in Ohio. This work is a crucial next step in decision support to advance economic mobility for graduates, especially in this time when the perceived value of higher education is in question. This session will review work to date including the development process, prototype dashboard, and the experience of the prototyping institutions. It will also offer specific advice and lessons learned to institutions interested in building state partnerships, creating data sharing agreements, and soliciting stakeholder input to build education and workforce data linkages for their own use.

Presenter(s): Lisa Stich; Jeffrey Carpenter

The Prevalence of FTIC Student Distress and Its Impact on One-Year Retention
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Research & Policy

Student well-being has emerged as a critical focus in higher education. Utilizing data from the university's 2022 New Bulls Intake Survey (NBIS), we analyzed responses from 5,037 incoming FTIC students to assess levels of psychological distress, as determined by the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6), and their impact on student retention. Results revealed that the level of psychological distress plays a role in student retention. Attendees will gain insights into the benefits of monitoring student well-being, including its impact on retention rates and the overall student experience. Additionally, the session will emphasize the importance of understanding student experiences and engagement as key

factors in promoting student success. Contributing Authors: Bruce McCollaum – University of South Florida

Presenter(s): Michael J. Bolen; Iyshia Lowman

IR Leaders Sharing Their Career Pathways, Successes, and Lessons Learned
Panel Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Leadership & Career Development

As the professional landscape of institutional research continues to evolve, understanding how to successfully navigate one's career path to professional success is more important than ever. This panel will feature leaders from several universities who have made remarkable career progress. Each panelist brings a unique background and experience, representing diverse perspectives in leadership development in different institutional settings. The panel discussion will center around their career journeys, how they overcame challenges, and what strategies they employed to advance. They will also share the key lessons they've learned and the secrets behind their success. Attendees will gain valuable insights into professional growth, leadership development, and strategies for breaking barriers. Contributing Authors: Hui Xiong - Wellesley College

Presenter(s): Yesenia Espinal; Adrea Hernandez; Jennifer Wu; Henry Zheng

To Test or Not to Test: That Is the Question
Panel Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Research & Policy

Due to the unprecedented challenges associated with the pandemic, many higher education institutions (HEIs) have removed standardized tests as part of their college admission application requirements. The roles of the standardized test scores for admission decisions have been reviewed over the years and even more so during the post-COVID-19 era. With the pandemic now ended, HEIs are revisiting their decisions on the admission policies regarding standardized tests. Two private four-year institutions are currently offering test-optional choices to their applicants out of the concerns for negative effects associated with COVID-19, as well as for accessibility to participate in standardized testing. To support data-informed decisions, the institutions are examining the relationships of standardized test scores and student success indicators as part of their comprehensive review process. Information examined will be shared to engage attendees in a dialogue about the policies.

Presenter(s): Rita (Xiaoayan) Liu; Timothy Chow

Networking reception hosted by AIR Board of Directors in the Exhibit Hall
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K | Networking Reception

Join us for a networking reception hosted by AIR Board of Directors in the Exhibit Hall. Be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there.

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AIRUM Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Wekiwa 4
Presenter(s): Nichole Peterson

Association of American Universities Data Exchange Auxiliary Meeting
Auxiliary Meeting | Wekiwa 5
Presenter(s): Jonathan Schwarz

Graduate Student Gathering
Auxiliary Meeting | Wekiwa 1
Presenter(s): Karen L. Webber; Karen Vance

RMAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Wekiwa 6
Presenter(s): Shiloh Fling

SAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Panzacola F1
Presenter(s): James Hunt

Single Person/Small IR Offices Auxiliary Meeting
Auxiliary Meeting | Wekiwa 3
Presenter(s): Kelli Cox

Thursday, May 22, 2025

8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Exhibit Hall and AIR Networking Hub open
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K

Our Exhibit Hall is the central networking hub for all attendees and sponsors.

8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

Benchmarking for Success: Identifying the Metrics That Matter Most
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Decision Support

City Colleges of Chicago is using benchmarking data and institutional early indicators to inform ongoing continuous improvement efforts across the institution, from facilities to finance, gateway momentum to transfer. This presentation will highlight the process for identifying and socializing key metrics, sources for benchmarking including an overview of the National Community College Benchmarking Project, early successes in continuous improvement, and lessons learned. Contributing Authors: Samuel Zuckert – City Colleges of Chicago

Presenter(s): Brittany Kairis; Jacquelyn Eidson; Michelle Taylor

Beyond the Lecture Hall: Showcasing Impact in Academia and Research
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 6 | Technology & Tools

You've navigated uncharted waters before, and now you are called upon to do it again. How are you analyzing your institutional data and insights on your peers to chart the clearest way through? Join Interfolio and Elsevier as we discuss effective strategic approaches to take your institutional data and enhance it with global insights to understand the opportunities with your current resources

Presenter(s): Peter Darroch; Josh Gianitsis; Robert Morse

Data Governance 101: Building a Data Glossary
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

Data glossaries are a critical component within the data governance framework. It is an important reference tool for data stewards and other stakeholders across the campus to speak a common language. Considered as the single source of truth, it provides a detailed understanding of data terms, datasets, and their context. The Data Governance and integrity Committee at Youngstown State University is working to create a data glossary to define key terms and promote the use of standardized language to ensure data quality and reliability. Power BI was utilized to enhance the glossary to make it user-friendly and interactive. In this session, I will outline the process of creating a data glossary, from compiling the initial list to transforming it into a user-friendly, searchable directory.

This program is subject to change. Visit airweb.org/forumapp for the most current and complete listing

Presenter(s): Ambreen Hasan

Designing and Deploying Assessment Dashboards for Action and Decision-Making
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Assessment & Evaluation

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the need for nuanced, data-driven decision-making has never been more critical. Traditional PDF assessment reports, while once standard, are no longer sufficient to address the complex research questions and institutional challenges of today's fast-paced environment. This session will focus on the transformative impact of assessment dashboards, emphasizing their ability to deliver research insights visually and provide multiple levels of customization for a personalized stakeholder experience. Participants will examine approaches to data visualization and breakouts; learn best practices for successful implementation, deployment, and data security; and explore the benefits of dashboard utilization, including improved data transparency. By transitioning from static reports to intersectional, detailed, and interactive dashboards, institutions can unlock deeper insights and make more informed, timely decisions that drive meaningful outcomes.

Presenter(s): Shannon Foster; Brandon Hutton

Education Reengagement: Investigating Some College, No Credential Students
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Research & Policy

As enrollment concerns rise with the demographic cliff looming, institutions have looked to bring back students who stopped out of college without receiving a credential. Since 2022, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center has reported annually on the demographic breakdown of the Some College, No Credential (SCNC) population, how many decide to return to postsecondary education, and success metrics for those who do. This presentation will focus on the most recent results for SCNC reengagement in the 2023–24 academic year and cover notable trends observed over the last three years. In addition to highlighting the demographic disparities that continue to persist among the SCNC population, the presentation will help inform campus administrators and policymakers about the specific needs of the SCNC population by examining how returning students interact with postsecondary education. Contributing Authors: Allyson Gardner, Matthew Holsapple, and Douglas Shapiro, National Student Clearinghouse

Presenter(s): Jeremy Cohen; Jennifer Causey

Embracing the Rising Tide of Dual Enrollment
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Decision Support

Relevant literature has documented the benefits of dual enrollment (DE) as a strategy for getting a head start on college and prioritizing equity. With the passage of Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation in 2021, enrollment of high school students taking college-level coursework has dramatically increased, particularly for Maryland community colleges. This presentation showcases how a comprehensive IR office uses data visualization, analysis, and assessment to support DE course delivery, track student educational pathways, and enhance DE student success as well as institutional outcomes. Specific IR work examples that helped to advance the college's data-informed decision-making will be shared at the session.

Presenter(s): Shuang Liu

Essential Metrics—and a Framework—for Strategic Benchmarking
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Assessment & Evaluation

In this session, we will share with you essential metrics—and a framework—for assessing the financial and operational health of your institution, setting targets, quantifying the impact of potential actions, prioritizing areas for strategic focus, and developing a focused and data-informed strategy for ensuring the financial health and sustainability of your institution. The presentation will include (1) comparison groups; (2) essential metrics; (3) formulas for quantifying impact; and (4) developing a data-informed strategy. We will also discuss how to establish decision-making processes that align with your institution's mission and culture. Throughout, we will share experiences and insights from the practical application of this approach at the College of Idaho as part of a strategic decision-making process. We will show you a dashboard tool that automates the data work and send you home with an Excel template that you can use at your home institution.

Presenter(s): Seth F. Houston; Andrew Gades

How to Work 24/7 (Without Working 24/7)
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Tired of working long hours and answering the same questions over and over? Looking to do more with few resources but don't know how? Seeking ways to assess and build data literacy on campus but don't know where to start? Our small IR team will share practical solutions that resulted in 24/7 availability, without working 24/7. We will focus on our journey and the process to strategically expand data transparency, literacy, and capacity using readily available tools and technology at most institutions (i.e., Microsoft SharePoint, Planner, and Power BI; Canva; university website). We will reveal our initial reactions, discuss challenges with solutions, and highlight benefits to both our team and campus stakeholders. This session will provide an opportunity, especially at resource-limited institutions, to rethink office operations in order to expand data literacy and capacity in ways that benefit an entire institution.

Presenter(s): Kristin McKinley; Haley Wallace; Sarah Dunnagan

Identifying and Improving Equity Gaps in Student Retention
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Decision Support

This presentation highlights a project aimed at improving equity and retention for Penn State World Campus's online students. The Population Index method identifies representation inconsistencies in student group proportion reporting, which provides insight into possible equity gaps. The presentation will introduce the concept of Population Index and how we utilized it in retention reporting at World Campus. We will discuss the process of introducing the Population Index to our organization, including the initial discussions and the steps taken to incorporate it within our systems. Finally, we will also discuss its use in support of strategic planning.

Presenter(s): Ashton Webb; Nadia Richardson

Leverage Labor Market Information in Strategic Planning Analysis for IR
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Assessment & Evaluation

In recent years, there have been surging discussions in the IR profession regarding leveraging labor market information in higher education institutions' strategic planning processes. Compared to traditional student outcome measurements, such as graduation rate, GPA, or time-to-degree, labor market outcomes are considered consistent and informative about how competitive students are in their professional careers nationwide and even worldwide. However, digging for information from labor market data is not an easy process. Working with labor market information often costs high subscription fees from data services, time commitment, and a high learning curve for IR analysts. This session focuses on the audience with entry-level to advanced-level data analysis skills. It will introduce several major labor market data resources open for public use, followed by data manipulation guidance about extracting essential labor market information from the raw data.

Presenter(s): Yizhi Zhu

Managing the IR Workload: Optimizing Institutional Resources
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Technology & Tools

Institutional Research (IR) offices are experiencing increased reporting burdens from national, state, and accrediting agencies while also supporting growing internal data needs. With increased workload, now is the time to get organized and facilitate collaboration among the IR team. This session will highlight how a newly expanded two-person IR office for sister colleges of nursing (Saint Anthony College of Nursing and Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing) utilized collaboration technology to facilitate communication and organization. What started as an effort to explore technological tools to support collaboration (e.g., Microsoft 365 apps) led to the creation of a shared team virtual workspace that organized their efforts. Participants will examine opportunities to enhance communication and organization within IR offices and apply collaborative technology tools to the IR role.

Presenter(s): Jennifer Larson; Beth Harp

Modeling Nonlinear Relationships Between Predictor and Outcome Variables
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Technology & Tools

It is easy to build regression models where the continuous predictors have a linear relationship to the outcome variable. However, it sometimes happens that an important variable has a NONlinear relationship to some outcome of interest. A student's age, for example, may be related to academic outcomes in complex ways: students under 18 are different from students of traditional college age, who are different from working adults, who are different from students near or past retirement. In situations like these, neither simple linear regression nor a standard transformation (e.g., taking the log of the predictor variable) provides an adequate model. This session presents four techniques for handling nonlinear predictors like age: binning, piecewise linear regression, polynomial regression, and splines. For each approach, we will discuss its mathematical basis, its pros and cons, and how the technique can be implemented in R.

Presenter(s): Abby Kaplan

Program Productivity Review Metrics for University System
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Decision Support

Program review and productivity is a complex and necessary process as more higher education institutions focus on the costs and benefits of offering programs. This presentation reviews the recent revision of program review policy and metric development at the University of North Carolina System Office, a system of 16 public universities in NC offering around 1,800 degree programs at all degree levels. Implementation of the metrics included developing evaluation criteria and a process for scheduling systematic program review. In addition to presenting the process and decision-making of the metric development, the template and initial outcomes will be presented.

Presenter(s): Giana J. Malak

Timing Matters! Experimenting to Boost Representation in Survey Responses
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Research & Policy

Surveys are a valuable tool for higher education institutions to understand students. This study aimed to determine when students are more likely to respond to surveys and whether this varied by student characteristics. We believe we can gain insights into improving survey response rates and gather more representative information from this research.

Presenter(s): Ya-Feng Lin

8:45 AM - 9:45 AM

AIR LEADs and Holistic Approach to IR Alumni Coffee Break
Panzacola G1

This is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with fellow alumni, share your experiences since completing the course(s), and network with instructors and professionals who continue to grow and inspire.

Coffee and networking in the Exhibit Hall
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K | Coffee Break

Join us for a Coffee break and networking in the Exhibit Hall and be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there!

9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

A Practitioner's Guide for Implementing a University-Wide Survey Policy
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Research & Policy

This session will offer Institutional Research (IR) practitioners a comprehensive guide on developing and implementing a university-wide survey coordination policy. Presenters will outline their university's policy objectives and provide a detailed, step-by-step process for streamlining survey administration across the campus community. Attendees will gain insights into the benefits of a coordinated survey system, such as improved data quality and communication, reduced redundancy, and enhanced

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response rates and representation. Additionally, the session will address the lessons learned and political challenges associated with coordinating survey efforts.

Presenter(s): Michael J. Bolen; Iyshia Lowman; Valeria Garcia

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9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

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Alternative Methodologies for Assessing Social Mobility
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Research & Policy

The 2025 Social and Economic Mobility (SEM) classification in the Carnegie system aims to assess how well institutions promote upward mobility for students. The SEM framework relies on national data sources that lack sufficient detail to evaluate institutional access and focuses on partial postgraduation income, which oversimplifies the diversity of institutional missions. It risks incentivizing short-term financial outcomes over broader educational goals. This session proposes alternative methodologies for gauging an institution's success in attracting and supporting diverse students by incorporating detailed student-level data, localized demographic and economic information from the Census Bureau, and broader outcome measures such as civic engagement and general health. These alternatives offer a more nuanced, equitable way to assess how well institutions contribute to social mobility.

Presenter(s): Craig W. Abbey; Michele Sedor

Creating a Streamlined Factbook: Overcoming Limited Manpower and Technology
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Technology & Tools

The Factbook is an important institutional artifact. However, at a small institution with an Office of Institutional Research that has limited technology and manpower, producing the Factbook can be a time-consuming journey—especially if the IR office is comprised of one person. In this presentation, participants at small institutions will gain strategies for designing a comprehensive, detailed, and accurate Factbook that can be reproduced quickly year-to-year. The presenter relies on strategies they gained when they redesigned the Factbook they inherited that allowed them to produce the Factbook quickly and accurately using standard tools, such as Microsoft Word, Access, and Excel, and data they already generated for internal and external sources, such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Common Data Set, American Association of University Professors, and state entities.

Presenter(s): Rachel E. Smith

Digital Transformation: Building SEO-Driven Websites and Efficient Portals
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Technology & Tools

In today's digital landscape, a well-designed, user-centered external website is essential for large institutions. This session will explore how to optimize your website for user engagement, SEO best practices, and accessibility standards. We'll discuss the latest strategies to ensure your site ranks well in search engines and is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. Additionally, we'll explore how focusing on external engagement creates a need for a robust internal portal to streamline workflows. By leveraging Microsoft Azure for on-demand infrastructure and Python for task optimization, institutions can enhance team collaboration and operational efficiency. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to improve both their institution's external digital presence and internal processes.

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Presenter(s): Virginia Kyle Phillips; Rick Loveday

Empowering Student Success Through Technology-Driven Interactive Dashboards
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Decision Support

In this session, we will showcase how Colorado State University has leveraged interactive dashboards to support stakeholders in making data-informed decisions. The dashboards provide real-time insights into key metrics such as DFW rates, GPA trends, and student demographic characteristics, allowing for the identification of achievement gaps and the development of targeted strategies to close them. Attendees will see firsthand how these tools can be used to inform institutional planning and decision-making, helping stakeholders design interventions to support student success more effectively. By the end of this session, participants will leave with practical strategies for implementing tool-agnostic dashboard solutions at their institutions, enhancing their ability to visualize data and take action to improve equitable student outcomes.

Presenter(s): Tae Yamaki; Heather Novak; Nicole Ross

Enhancing Data Privacy in the Age of AI/ML in Higher Education
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Technology & Tools

As AI/ML technologies continue to reshape higher education, institutions face both opportunities and risks in data management and privacy. This presentation, based on my 2024 article in New Directions in Higher Education, explores the growing gap between the rapid adoption of AI/ML and the development of effective privacy policies. With incidents like data breaches and surveillance on the rise, the session highlights key privacy challenges, including data ownership, consent, and ethical use of predictive models. Using two case studies from universities and insights from Europe's AI Act, we discuss how to address these risks and present best practices for incorporating privacy in AI/ML systems. The goal is to empower IR professionals to lead in policy development, ensuring transparency, accountability, and safeguarding privacy in AI-driven environments.

Presenter(s): Eric Yang

Establishing a Formal Institutional Survey Schedule and Policy
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

The lack of formal processes or policies regarding institutional surveys often leads to a myriad of issues such as confusion, scheduling conflicts, and delays in approval decisions as well as in conducting the survey itself. Even when formal processes and policies do exist, they are too frequently not easily accessible or clearly communicated. This presentation will detail Augusta University's Institutional Survey Schedule Policy, the submission/approval process, and publishing the survey schedule/calendar as a Tableau dashboard (viewable to the public).

Presenter(s): Andrew John K. Tarr

Flexing Data: How Campus Gym Engagement Boosts Student Performance
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Decision Support

In this session, we will explore the relationship between student performance and gym attendance at the University of West Florida (UWF) Health and Leisure Sports (HLS) Facility using logistic regression with hyperparameter tuning. Attendees will learn how predictive models can be leveraged to assess student success through the lens of campus facility usage. We will cover the complete data analysis pipeline and showcase how R Shiny was used to visualize the results and make the insights actionable for stakeholders. Key takeaways include understanding how to apply machine learning techniques like logistic regression to real-world datasets, the value of hyperparameter tuning for model accuracy, and the power of interactive data visualizations for engaging nontechnical audiences. This session is ideal for institutional researchers and data scientists interested in the intersection of student outcomes and campus resources.

Presenter(s): Jonathan E. Lee; Nadya Collins

Investing in Success: Evaluating Barriers to Student Retention
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Research & Policy

Your institution has been gifted funds to be used to help students with "financial need". How can you make sure you allocate them in a way that will most positively impact retention? This is a question we set out to investigate. Using several measures of "financial need" (including the FAFSA calculation of unmet need, outstanding balance in the first fall, bright futures scholarship award, and grant/loan receipt), we reviewed rates of these characteristics across retained/not retained students in our FTIC cohorts. Join us as we identify which indicator(s) proved the most notable for us in the comparison of these measures.

Presenter(s): Katherine C. Gipalo; Samantha Nix

Leveraging Data to Support Strategic Planning: Carnegie Mellon's Process
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Decision Support

Institutional Research offices are often asked to provide data to support institutional strategic planning processes. However, being intensively engaged in facilitating the strategic planning process is uncommon. Carnegie Mellon's leaders recognized that as institutions face evolving challenges in higher education—ranging from changing demographics to shifts in labor market demands—a data-intensive approach is crucial to making data-informed decisions. In this presentation, we will share a case study of Carnegie Mellon University's Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Office providing comprehensive data analysis support to the university's strategic planning efforts. Our process includes a multifaceted environmental scan, benchmarking against peer institutions, and stakeholder surveys to guide the future institutional strategy. These data points are essential to support all stages of the planning process.

Presenter(s): Melissa L. Baker; Henry Zheng; Matthew Hoolsema

New Director Bingo: Highs and Lows of Your First Six Months
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Leadership & Career Development

Assuming a new leadership role in institutional research brings a slate of unanticipated joys, stresses, and learning opportunities. In this session, an experienced IR leader and a new IR leader share their recent experiences with taking on new leadership roles in their respective offices. We will share tips and tricks on how to make the transition easier, how to find your identity as an institutional research leader, and maybe even a few funny stories! Come laugh and play New IR Leader Bingo with us as we share so you can learn without the messiness of real-world mishaps.

Presenter(s): Heather Mechler; Charla Orozco

Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) Roadmap and Feedback
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Technology & Tools

Discover the latest advancements and future plans for the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) directly from the dedicated team at the National Student Clearinghouse, including insights from the product manager. This is your chance to learn about the impactful work accomplished over the past year and what's on the horizon. Why Attend? Exclusive Insights: Get a firsthand look at the improvements and innovations shaping the PDP. Interactive Feedback: Share your thoughts and suggestions during the session and throughout the Forum. Networking Opportunities: Connect with fellow PDP users and enthusiasts.

Presenter(s): Marty Schmidt

Redefining IR in the Heart of the Dairyland
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3 | Decision Support

The office of Data, Academic Planning and Institutional Research (DAPIR) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison manages the structures needed to ensure the availability of accessible, usable, high-quality data. This allows us to provide meaningful information and analysis. Along with our campus partners, we promote an institution-wide data strategy and the use of data to inform strategic initiatives and planning. This session will introduce attendees to DAPIR's leadership team, provide an overview of our office functions, and share how this structure best positions us to provide decision support to our campus community.

Presenter(s): Bethany Crowell; Allison La Tarte

Revolutionizing Institutional Survey Data Analysis With AI and NLP
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Technology & Tools

Discover how AI and NLP can revolutionize survey data analysis in higher education by automating labor-intensive tasks, enhancing consistency, and providing deep insights. This session will explore the use of LLMs to categorize, analyze sentiment, and extract key insights from institutional research survey responses. Attendees will learn how to leverage AI tools to reduce manual efforts, ensure reliable data interpretation, and present findings through intuitive visualizations. Topics will include AI and NLP in automating survey data analysis, including categorization, sentiment analysis, and insight extraction. The importance to attendees: Learn how AI can reduce manual effort, enhance consistency, and provide deeper insights for data-driven decision-making. Session objectives: Understand AI's role in transforming survey data analysis, implement LLMs effectively, and leverage visualization tools for presenting insights.

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Presenter(s): Ying Lin

Sixty Years Collecting Incoming Student Data: What Are We Missing?
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Assessment & Evaluation

Milestones provide unique opportunities to reflect on the past and plan for the future of our practice. Planning the 60th administration of the CIRP Freshman Survey has enabled HERI scholars to do just that. It has also prompted the need for a larger conversation that will provide a forum for IR professionals to take stock of their experiences with survey data, covering topics including survey content, administration, deliverables, and data usage. The conversation will also cover challenges and successes in administration and applying data to institutional decision-making. The dialogue will also address the future of IR-related survey research, particularly as it relates to incoming students.

Presenter(s): Ellen B. Stolzenberg

Strong Foundations 2025: Trends and Insights in State Postsecondary Data
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Research & Policy

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association has conducted the Strong Foundations survey to investigate the collection, use, and value of state postsecondary student unit record systems (PSURs). The 2025 Strong Foundations survey builds on previous efforts, featuring enhancements in longitudinal data collection and a special focus on rural student data. This presentation features interactive Tableau dashboards that allow users to explore trends in PSUR characteristics; key data elements by state and sector; and linkages to K-12, workforce, and other state data systems over time. Attendees will gain insights, actionable strategies, and best practices into how states are leveraging PSUR data to advance student success, achieve state attainment goals, understand and improve the value of higher education, and enhance equity and opportunity for underserved populations.

Presenter(s): Sean M. Baser; Jessica Colorado

Survival Analysis of Student Retention, a Multicollege Perspective
Speaker Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Assessment & Evaluation

This study uses the survival analysis to track students during the first six years of their undergraduate studies. The sample of the study covers students from six universities. The survival analysis models the time-to-dropout data and identifies the dropout changes over time. The study is designed to answer these questions: (1) How is the student attrition distributed during the six years? (2) What is the estimated retention probability by semester? (3) What are the factors contributing to student attrition? and (4) Do the factors change at particular points during the six years of undergraduate studies? Contributing Authors: Jing Zhao, Eastern University; Charles Deng, Florida A&M University; Annie Ye Ji, Kean University; Eric Wang, University of Alabama; Jennifer Wu, Penn State College of Engineering

Presenter(s): Jing Zhao; Jennifer Wu

Increase Revenue and Reduce Costs with a Program Evaluation System
Sponsor Product Demonstration | Expo Theater 2 | Decision Support

This demo will show you how Program Evaluation Software helps you strategically increase revenue and reduce costs to better serve your mission and your students. With a comprehensive suite of metrics, you can easily analyze market demand, understand profitability, and identify areas for improvement to better allocate resources toward student success and institutional health.

Presenter(s): Ralph Garcia

Streamline Faculty Activity Reporting to Support Program Accreditation
Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Expo Theater 1 | Assessment & Evaluation

Join Academic Analytics for an insightful presentation featuring Julie Carpenter-Hubin, Senior Advisor, past President of AIR and former Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning at The Ohio State University, and Jenny Hulsen, Senior Product Manager. This session will showcase Academic Analytics Faculty Insight Suite and how it is designed to put Academic Analytics data into the hands of faculty to better tell their story. This information may be augmented by institutional data as well as faculty self-reported data. Once integrated these data are an invaluable resource to critical reporting processes including accreditation. Discover how this tool can enhance efficiency, accuracy, and ease of use in managing faculty activities and meeting accreditation requirements. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from an expert and see a live demonstration of a tool that can transform your data management practices.

Presenter(s): Julie Carpenter-Hubin; Jenny Hulsen

Creating Our Future: Four Scenarios for the Next Decade in Higher Education
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Leadership & Career Development

Higher education in the 2020s continues to undergo tectonic shifts that will shape our future for years to come. Rather than see change as a threat, we can view it as an opportunity to build the stronger future we want for our students, our institutions, and ourselves. The future is not predetermined, and we have the agency to shape it through the actions we take now. Grounded in the field of Strategic Foresight, this presentation will encourage attendees to consider how the trends, issues, and events happening in higher education and beyond today will impact the success of future students. By understanding these forces shaping our world, we can anticipate the scenarios that lie ahead and take steps to guide ourselves to the future we want. You will come away with a better understanding of how you can shape your institutions to best support the students of tomorrow.

Presenter(s): Ed Venit

Developing an AI Infrastructure for Analytics and Institutional Effectiveness
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Technology & Tools

In this session, we will provide case studies showing how Virginia Tech is using large language models to complement our work across analytics and institutional effectiveness. Using foundational models embedded in a cloud-based infrastructure, we can implement use cases while circumventing concerns about data sharing and privacy. First, we explore a project to classify courses and research outputs into categories of strategic interest. The tools allow rapid and accurate labeling of outputs and allow summarization to understand how outputs precisely contribute to and support areas in our efforts toward reputational excellence. Second, we demonstrate how AI infrastructure can improve the efficiency and potentialities of academic program assessment and administrative assessment processes. Beginning with a synopsis of baseline uses such as comparative assessments, we conclude with efforts toward building Knowledge Bases for Retrieval-Augmented Generation and making the tools available to end users. Contributing Authors: Ben Greenawald, Virginia Tech

Presenter(s): Rob Hopkins; Jonathan Dixon

Embedding Success: Insights From the IR Data Partners Program
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

This session will explore transformative strategies for integrating Institutional Research (IR) data into decision-making processes in academic colleges. We will demonstrate how collaborative data partnerships enhance institutional effectiveness, improve student outcomes, and inform policy development. Participants will gain insights into best practices for data governance, stakeholder engagement, and fostering a culture of data-engaged decision-making. By bridging the gap between data collection and actionable insights, this session aims to equip institutional leaders and IR professionals with the tools necessary to leverage data as a catalyst for institutional improvement and student success.

Presenter(s): Heather Epstein-Diaz; Eclipse Ramsey I; Tendo Chen

Enhancing Learning With Canvas Engagement and Course Evaluation Data
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Decision Support

As online learning continues to expand, it is crucial for institutions to understand how student engagement within Learning Management Systems (LMS) impacts learning outcomes. This session explores the relationship between student Canvas engagement and their online course performance. By leveraging Canvas engagement with Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) data, the session offers a data-informed analysis of how Canvas engagement behaviors correlate with learning outcomes. Attendees will gain insights into effectively integrating LMS and course evaluation data to enhance student success, improve learning outcomes, and refine online course designs. The session also addresses the challenges of extracting, analyzing, and integrating LMS data with SETs, presenting strategies for effective data usage. Participants will leave with actionable approaches to apply these insights in optimizing online education at their institutions and to foster a more enriching online learning experience for students.

Presenter(s): Shiloh Fling; Qingmin Shi; Tina Nelson

This program is subject to change. Visit airweb.org/forumapp for the most current and complete listing

Implementation of a Federal Student Level Data Network (SLDN)
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 2 | Research & Policy

Will the federal government start collecting student-level records to replace some IPEDS data? Although no law has been passed to date, many policy observers believe the question is when, not if, a federal Student Level Data Network (SLDN) will become a reality. As recent challenges related to FAFSA and FVT/GE have shown, implementation of policies can be challenging. The purpose of this session is to give space and voice to individuals who would like to contribute to a conversation on how to successfully implement a SLDN. Specifically designed as a discussion group, we will present a short background on the SLDN and initial findings from focus groups with approximately 50 IR professionals. We will then pose questions to attendees that mirror those in the previously conducted focus groups in order to allow other voices to shape the conversation of how best to implement such a large change in federal reporting.

Presenter(s): Josh Pretlow; Jamie Isaac

Integrating LLM-based AI for IR: Practical Approaches and Strategies
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Technology & Tools

This presentation offers a practical framework for integrating Large Language Models (LLM)-based AI into IR. It introduces three approaches: using off-the-shelf chatbots, deploying code-based solutions, and exploring advanced AI-powered software. Real-world examples—from data analysis and survey design to qualitative research—demonstrate each method. Emphasis is placed on optimizing performance while ensuring cost-efficiency, data privacy, and bias monitoring. Non-technical attendees will gain a clear roadmap for choosing and implementing LLM solutions aligned with their capabilities and institutional needs, while technically inclined participants will deepen their understanding of LLM training, model benchmarking, prompt engineering, and iterative output evaluation. This comprehensive guide empowers forward-thinking IR professionals to integrate AI responsibly and effectively, revolutionizing data reporting, analysis, and research with transformative, LLM-powered strategies.

Presenter(s): Linli Zhou

IR Robot: Crafting a Pragmatic AI Usage Policy for Your Office
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Technology & Tools

It is not science fiction. The robots are here, and they are helping us analyze open-ended survey comments. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT and Copilot are the hot new tool in institutional data analysis. But before diving in, institutional research practitioners should consider implementing an office-wide AI Data Usage policy. Using Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics as a conceptual framework, this session guides attendees through crafting their own research-informed AI Usage Policy including procedures limiting risk of harm, recommendations for optimized prompting, and understanding the reality of the robot on the other side of the webpage. The session will end with a discussion on formal and informal AI policies and broader ethical considerations. Session attendees will leave with a policy template and the confidence to draft and implement their own AI Usage Policy when they return to their institutions. Assuming the robot uprising hasn't already started…

Presenter(s): Jillian Morn

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Projecting Incoming Cohort Size and Course Enrollments via Machine Learning
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

The Admitted Matriculation Projection (AMP) is a supervised machine learning model (LightGBM) that predicts the size, characteristics, and course enrollments of the incoming Fall cohort up to 8 months prior. Using weekly snapshots of historical application activity, AMP compares each student admitted for the Fall term to contemporaneous data on prior cohorts to generate individualized probabilities to enroll in ~75 lower-level courses. AMP's granularity (student-course pairs) yields greater accuracy and flexibility than standard methods extrapolating historical aggregate data. AMP also accounts for fluctuations in application activity and projects cohort characteristics, such as demographic composition, academic background, and geographic distribution. We highlight AMP's use of advanced, free, open-source Python packages like FLAML (automated machine learning), MiceForest (missing data imputation), and SHAP (model explainability) that could assist a wide range of predictive IR tasks.

Presenter(s): Scott A. Cook; Morgan Carter

Strategic Transition: Leading K-State Data Strategy and Structural Alignment
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Leadership & Career Development

As universities face increasing pressures from declining enrollment, shifting demographics, and economic uncertainties, the need for data-informed decision-making has never been more critical for daily operations and strategic planning. However, universities struggle to harness the full potential of their data due to isolated data systems and siloed culture. This session explores K-States' strategic response to this challenge by influencing change through a cohesive data strategy. It details the ensuing reorganization, which consolidated IT and IR data management, governance, and business intelligence functions under a Chief Data Officer. Attendees will be guided through the transition journey of a growing data office, highlighting key considerations, best practices, and potential pitfalls to avoid when managing a successful realignment. This session offers valuable insights for institutions looking to optimize their data functions for long-term success.

Presenter(s): Reena Khosla; Chris Urban

The Past, Present, and Future of the Fact Book at the University of Arizona
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Technology & Tools

The fact book has become the primary public platform for conveying data about institutions of higher education since the mid1970s. Since then, the fact book has evolved in parallel with new developments in technology allowing for innovative and more efficient ways of sharing key metrics. This session will provide a historical survey of the fact book's evolution, including a focus on current practices at the University of Arizona and a sneak peek into future plans for leveraging artificial intelligence to enhance usability.

Presenter(s): Ashley Hurand; Ravneet Chadha

The Transition to a Centralized Data Request Process
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Decision Support

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This session will focus on the development and enhancement of a centralized data request process at Augusta University. By emphasizing the importance of collaborating with data trustees, data stewards, IT, and other institutional offices, attendees will examine effective ways to create a team approach to transitioning to a more streamlined data request process. Presenters will delve deeper into specific tools and strategies that can be utilized at other institutions, regardless of the IR staff size. Contributing Authors: Erika Grimm, Augusta University

Presenter(s): Christopher O. Weldon; Chelsea Bridges

Understanding Money: Sources and Specifics of Earnings Data
Sponsor Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Technology & Tools

How much a student earns has become commonplace over the past decade and increasingly important for institutions to understand. Yet, what is less clear are the various sources of earnings data being used, the strengths and limitations of each source, and the considerations one must give when interpreting the data for stakeholders. The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of various earnings data sources, compare and contrast the assumptions behind the resulting earnings values, and explore prior and current efforts to expand access to earnings data.

Presenter(s): Christopher M. Mullin; Troy Miller

Unlocking the Potential of Faculty Data on Your Campus
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Decision Support

While institutions have invested in improving the infrastructure for and analysis of student data to support student success, the potential of faculty data for student, faculty, and institutional success often remains unrealized. In this discussion session, facilitators will share findings from research related to what types of faculty data are available on different campuses and give participants the opportunity to inventory what faculty data are available on their campus. Through reflection and discussion, participants will consider the strategic questions that can be answered with faculty data, as well as the lived and anticipated challenges they face creating a multidimensional understanding of faculty through data. Participants will leave with a framework for leading change on their campus from an institutional research perspective to unlock the potential of faculty data.

Presenter(s): KC Culver; Wen Qi

Using Python and Tableau to Build an Interactive Student Success Model
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Decision Support

Student success is a multidimensional concept that can be influenced by a wide range of factors including academic performance, socioeconomic background, and extracurricular engagement. In this session, we will walk through the process of building an interactive student-success model using Python for predictive analytics and Tableau for dynamic visualization and exploration. By combining the power of Python for model building and Tableau for interactive visualization, this session will guide participants through the process of creating a tool that dynamically responds to model inputs and presents predictions for selected subgroups.

Presenter(s): Salma Mirza; Cayden McDonald; Aishwary Pawar

Facilitating Data Access and Use for Accreditation and Student Success
Panel Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Assessment & Evaluation

The increasing volume of information and expectations to use data in higher education requires institutional research (IR) to cultivate greater involvement of a variety of campus audiences and ensure data are digestible. While a one-size report to all may seem efficient, dynamic, and focused, reporting coupled with collaborative, guided discussions are needed to foster data use. This panel session highlights effective IR data facilitation skills and resources to advance data use by presenting institutions' experience with focused interactive dashboards to disseminate National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data for accreditation, general education assessment, and student success initiatives to a range of campus stakeholders. In addition, participants will be introduced to new NSSE resources that map data with accreditation standards and dimensions of student success, guide inclusive data practices, and document lessons learned for collaborative data teams.

Presenter(s): Jillian Kinzie; Suzette Burlingame; Joni Wadley

Learning What Students Bring to College and Where They Hope It Takes Them
Panel Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Assessment & Evaluation

One path to promoting student success is to help students see the connection between their time at college and their longer-term goals for a successful life after college. Institutions also should try to identify issues that may disrupt students' sense of why they decided to attend college. In 2020, the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) piloted a survey for incoming students to help institutions do two things: (1) better understand their students' immediate and longer-term goals and (2) intervene to help students who may be unsure about why they are attending college and the kinds of success it can help them achieve. In this session, representatives from HEDS will discuss how and why they developed the HEDS New Student Survey and share key findings from the national data. Representatives from three institutions that have used the survey will talk about why they used the survey, what they did with the data, and how it was helpful in their student success efforts.

Presenter(s): Charles Blaich; Kathleen Wise; Amy Armenia; Eric Godin; Kristen Lindsay

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM

Strategic Foresight: A Tool for Planning for the Future You Want to See
Panel Session | Sebastian I3

For most IR/IE professionals the levels of demand for state and federal compliance reporting as well as internal requests leaves them in a situation where they can only focus on what is immediately on fire. This constant scramble places us in a pattern of behavior that doesn't allow us to strategically plan ahead and help shape our institutions in manners that we feel are most beneficial. The AIR Board of Directors has worked with the ASAE's ForesightWorks program to incorporate strategic foresight efforts around key drivers of change in higher education and the IR/IE profession to help plan for the association's future. In this concurrent session Board leaders will introduce what strategic foresight work is, talk about some of the key drivers identified by ASAE and those identified by the Board as most relevant for IR/IE

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professionals, and lead participants through a brief foresight exercise to help prepare them to use these tools on their own campuses.

Presenter(s): Adrea L. Hernandez; Brent Drake

<div style="text-align:center">11:10 AM - 11:30 AM</div>

Balancing the Ask: Managing Expectations in Campus Climate Assessment
Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Expo Theater 2 | Assessment & Evaluation

Since 2000, Rankin Climate has partnered with higher educational institutions, helping them use data to make pivotal decisions and transform communities. This session will explore the complexities of managing expectations throughout the campus climate assessment process—who's included in the planning, what's being asked, who's being asked, what comes out of the process, and what the next steps are. We will share strategies for engaging campus stakeholders, aligning institutional goals with campus needs, and navigating the tensions between transparency, action, and accountability. Our experts will discuss how campus climate data supports institutions in developing actions and defending initiatives that help students, staff, and faculty achieve academic, personal, and professional success. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of what it takes to balance methodological rigor, inclusive engagement, and strategic communication in campus climate assessment efforts.

Presenter(s): Kevin M. Swartout; Victoria Cabal

Implementing AI-enabled advising to drive better student outcomes.
Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Expo Theater 1 | Technology & Tools

A fireside chat-style conversation with DataKind and Paul Dosal, former Senior Vice President of Student Success at the University of Central Florida, that will look at the successful implementation of AI-enabled advising to drive better student outcomes. AI-enabled, human-in-the-loop software systems can change the current reactive student success paradigm by proactively identifying students needing support and delivering early, additive intervention. DataKind has been building and implementing such software since 2018, contributing to student degree attainment at institutions like John Jay College, where the senior graduation rate increased by 32%. Thanks to generous philanthropic support, DataKind will scale this approach through 100 new institutional partnerships by 2026 at no cost to participants.

Presenter(s): Caitlin Augustin; Paul Dosal

<div style="text-align:center">11:30 AM - 1:15 PM</div>

Lunch break, poster presentations, and networking in the Exhibit Hall (food for purchase)
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K | Lunch Break

Grab-and-go options for purchase will be in the Exhibit Hall on Wednesday, May 21, and Thursday, May 22. Be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there!

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11:45 AM - 12:45 PM

Colonial Group (G14) Auxiliary Meeting
Auxiliary Meeting | Wekiwa 4
Presenter(s): *Eric Yang*

12:15 PM - 1:15 PM

AI Companions for Data-Driven Support in IR and Meeting AACSB Standards
Poster Presentation | Poster 10 | Decision Support

This poster presentation explores the integration of AI learning companions in Business Ethics courses to address the need for real-time feedback, differentiated learning experiences, and personalized ethical decision-making. Drawing on findings from institutional research, it demonstrates how AI enhances course design by providing immediate analysis of students' decision-making data and supporting personalized learning experiences. This data-driven approach aligns with AACSB accreditation standards, ensuring continuous improvement in teaching effectiveness. Attendees will gain insights into (1) how AI supports data-driven decision-making and AACSB accreditation processes; (2) the role of AI in meeting students' needs for personalized and adaptive learning; and (3) practical strategies for implementing AI in institutional research and course design. Contributing Authors: Chieh-Lun Hsieh, University of Taipei; Po-Wei, National Taiwan Ocean University

Presenter(s): YUNG-HSIANG HU

Analysis of First-Generation College Students at One Japanese University
Poster Presentation | Poster 4 | Assessment & Evaluation

The purpose of this session is to use a survey of graduates from a private university in Japan to clarify whether there are any characteristics in the learning experiences and learning outcomes of first-generation students (hereafter referred to as "FG"). The data used in this study are from a survey conducted by the Center for University Research at Waseda University, a private university in Japan, on graduates from 2007 to 2010 (number of responses: n = 4,625, response rate: 12.1%). We analyzed the results of the survey of graduates, which asked about their career paths before entering university, while they were at university, and after graduating, by cross-tabulating the responses of FG and nonFG students and those from the Tokyo metropolitan area (Tokyo and three prefectures surrounding it) and those from other areas. This session will provide an opportunity to gather and discuss information about FG students based on a valuable survey of Japanese university graduates. Contributing Authors: Takeshi Endo, Waseda University

Presenter(s): Hirokuni Yamada

Assess Transnational Double/Joint Degree Program Policies
Poster Presentation | Poster 26 | Research & Policy

Taiwanese Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are actively expanding Transnational Double/Joint/Dual Degree Programs (TDJP) to enhance academic competitiveness and global engagement. This study examines TDJP from an institutional perspective, focusing on key factors that impact program success

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and alignment with institutional goals. Our analysis explores governance and policy frameworks, partnership agreements, academic standards, faculty involvement, and financial sustainability. Findings provide insights for HEIs seeking to develop sustainable TDJP models that balance internationalization with institutional priorities. Contributing Authors: Shih Mei-Duan, National Sun Yat-sen University

Presenter(s): Ching-Hui Lin

Charting the Change: A Study of Institutional Research Job Postings
Poster Presentation | Poster 20 | Research & Policy

As the landscape of higher education evolves, so too do the roles and skills required of Institutional Research professionals. This poster session explores how job responsibilities and qualifications in IR have shifted over the past two decades by analyzing job postings from 2005 and 2024. Using thematic analysis, this study highlights key trends. Attendees will gain an understanding of the evolving expectations for both upper-level and entry-level IR positions, along with key findings that highlight the future direction of the field.

Presenter(s): Joseph T. Finke

ChatGPT and Sentiment Analysis of Open-Ended NSSE Response Questions
Poster Presentation | Poster 2 | Assessment & Evaluation

Student surveys provide opportunities to mine open-ended response questions to discover patterns, trends, and knowledge that may be obscured in the quantitative analysis of the survey-structured questions. But qualitative coding by hand can be tedious and time-consuming. This poster presentation will guide researchers through the process of using ChatGPT to uncover themes in the NSSE 2023 student responses. The session will also provide information on Sentiment Analysis as well as Emotion Detection to show changes over time between the last three iterations of the NSSE survey.

Presenter(s): Melinda M. Whitford

Dashboard(s) for Easy Benchmarking of IPEDS Data
Poster Presentation | Poster 14 | Decision Support

The IPEDS data center provides comprehensive, reliable, and publicly accessible information on postsecondary institutions. This poster presentation will show how data from the IPEDS data center were used to create interactive dashboards using Tableau. The dashboards are designed to show data for various comparison groups and trends over time. In addition to presenting benchmarking data in an easily digestible format, the dashboards also enhance transparency and enable data-driven decision-making. The following topics will be covered in the poster presentation: Why IPEDS data?; the need for the dashboard; data extraction—IPEDS data center; data preparation—Excel, SPSS Access, Tableau Prep; data integration with Tableau; dashboard design and layout; dashboard development; benefits; and future work. The attendees will take away ideas for developing a similar tool at their institutions and the resources requirements.

Presenter(s): Vinay Ramachandra

Data Preparation to File Upload to Dashboard for Summary and Trend—IPEDS HR
Poster Presentation | Poster 28 | Technology & Tools

For Institutional Research (IR) offices, it is crucial to prepare and submit data to state and federal agencies accurately and promptly. Additionally, effectively using these data for validation and analysis is essential. Focusing on IPEDS HR as an example, this poster presentation will illustrate the data process, including examples of SAS and SQL program codes for data integration and tips for building and utilizing uploaded text files. It will describe the procedure for loading each year's datasets into database for further analysis and visualization. Power BI dashboard examples will be shown to display yearly trends in employee count, faculty rank distribution by college/department, and side-by-side yearly comparisons of staff numbers by employment status and occupational category. The data processes, programming codes, and visualization dashboards can be applied broadly to other data preparation and IPEDS reporting, providing valuable tools for IR professionals.

Presenter(s): Zhiyuan Ma; Ying Liu

Evaluating Machine Learning Techniques for Qualitative Institutional Data
Poster Presentation | Poster 30 | Technology & Tools

This research presents useful approaches to enhance data-driven decision-making in higher education, particularly by leveraging advanced machine learning (ML) techniques to analyze large and complex structured and unstructured qualitative datasets from higher education climate surveys. Our study applies various ML techniques to process these data more efficiently and effectively than traditional methods. We will evaluate the performance of each technique using established ML metrics (accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score) to determine the relevance and applicability of each method in institutional research. By comparing the outcomes of these techniques, this research aims to demonstrate how ML can streamline the analysis of qualitative data, providing higher education professionals with actionable insights to inform decision-making, improve institutional practices, and enhance campus climate.

Presenter(s): Kolbe M. Sussman; Anli Peng; Mary Bautista

Explainable and Unbiased Predictive Analytics for Institutional Researchers
Poster Presentation | Poster 16 | Decision Support

With the rapid growth of analytical methodologies from both statistics and data science, the ethical and transparent application of algorithmic outputs in support of university operations and activities has become increasingly important and has generated concern in the higher education community. This session discusses effective participatory approaches that ensure actionability of analytics, support the production of explainable Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, and minimize and effectively address the risk of bias in advanced analytics. The session will close with an interactive discussion on what it means to provide effective, accessible, and unbiased application of advanced analytics in institutional research.

Presenter(s): Rishika Samala; Tradara Dane'e McLaurine; Ritika Shrivastava

Investigating Georgia High School Graduate Postsecondary Participation
Poster Presentation | Poster 24 | Research & Policy

This poster presentation will explore postsecondary enrollment trends among Georgia public high school graduates. Leveraging a statewide longitudinal data system, the University System of Georgia (USG) Division of Research and Policy Analysis (RPA) conducted this analysis to support the USG's strategic goal of increasing in-state enrollment. This poster presentation will highlight how these data and subsequent analysis have supported USG stakeholders through key findings such as demographics more likely to enroll out of state and at which specific institutions they enroll. Contributing Authors: Lori Hagood, University System of Georgia

Presenter(s): Jaden A. Mikoulinskii; Leslie Hodges; Pearson Brown

Process Updates for High-Quality, High-Volume, Actionable Climate Reports
Poster Presentation | Poster 6 | Assessment & Evaluation

Climate assessments are a key resource for higher education institutions as they provide important information about employee experiences as well as intentions to stay in their current position. Staff from the ADVANCE Program's Research and Evaluation team highlight process improvements for high-quality, high-volume climate assessments conducted for academic and nonacademic units. These process improvements center around three core areas: (1) theoretical approach that reflects a modular approach to survey design; (2) technical improvements, leveraging R to automate, create, and streamlining figures; and (3) report design, including visuals and a high-level executive summary. Attendees will learn about process improvements and consider how these would be helpful to their own work with survey development and data reporting.

Presenter(s): Jordan Hudgins

The Critical Role of IR Offices in Propelling Multi-Institution Research
Poster Presentation | Poster 22 | Research & Policy

Institutional researchers play a crucial but often overlooked role in promoting the success of critical grant-funded research. While scholarly research may be a separate "wish list" item on top of intensive practitioner-focused projects that monopolize most IR offices' resources, we emphasize the important connection between the two strands of research and the unique position of IR professionals to propel scholarly research with strategic partnerships. A flourishing partnership between researchers and participating colleges' IR offices benefits the college and the broader field of education research. With this poster presentation, we illustrate this possibility with examples of research and evaluation projects from two- and four-year colleges where IR offices play a crucial role in their success. We address the challenges of bridging external and internal research demands and offer practical suggestions for how IR offices can advocate for these high-value projects without adding excessive burden.

Presenter(s): Susannah W. Townsend

Understand Career Outcomes Through the Council of Graduate Schools Project
Poster Presentation | Poster 18 | Research & Policy

U.S. graduate education plays a critical role in the advancement of knowledge and innovations that bolster the nation's ability to sustain its economic prosperity and global leadership. This presentation will discuss how the data reported to the Council of Graduate Schools can help shed light on the graduate career pathway and graduate education. Attendees will learn about the data collection effort of the CGS Surveys as well as the ways in which these data would be of assistance for benchmarking and strategic planning at multiple institutions. This presentation is relevant to enrollment management professionals, in particular to attendees in collaboration in multi-institutional projects, and it will empower attendees to undertake similar projects in the future.

Presenter(s): Enyu Zhou

Visualizing Uncertainty in Assessment and Institutional Data
Poster Presentation | Poster 12 | Decision Support

In IR/IE contexts, data visualization is essential for decision support and departmental planning. Visualizations often neglect measures of uncertainty (e.g., confidence intervals); yet in smaller sample contexts, this is a crucial element of decision-making, with implications for action steps and resource allocation. To model ways of visualizing uncertainty, this poster presentation outlines practices based on theories of visual information processing. Specifically, it reviews research on gradient plots, quantile dot plots, and encoding uncertainty using visual features (e.g., blurriness). The presentation concludes with a template for visualizing rubric results developed by UNC Wilmington's Department of Student Affairs Assessment, Research, and Planning, which uses quantile dot plots to represent 90% confidence intervals for estimated proficiency rates on rubrics—thus allowing Student Affairs practitioners to make better calibrated decisions for improvement based on evidence of student learning.

Presenter(s): Chris Schmader

Where Did Our STEM Majors Go? Novel Tools for Understanding Student Actions
Poster Presentation | Poster 8 | Assessment & Evaluation

We know that only about half of the undergraduates in the United States who start as STEM majors finish with a STEM degree, but what happens to the remaining students? Data normally tracked by institutions can reveal when students leave STEM and flag indicators that presage leaving (such as performing poorly in a "gateway" course). However, these data points do not reveal what happens next to the students who leave STEM. Equally important, institutional data provide little insight into how STEM retention rates can be improved. Attend this session to learn how Stanislaus State developed new tools to better understand why students leave STEM, and then used the information provided by these tools to design programs that cut the STEM attrition rate in half. And yes, we will happily share our tools with you, so you can apply them at your institution.

Presenter(s): Harold Stanislaw; Iqbal Atwal

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Dessert break and networking in the Exhibit Hall
Exhibit Hall | Sebastian J/K | Dessert Break

Join us for a dessert break and networking in the Exhibit Hall and be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there!

2:30 PM - 3:15 PM

Alternative Equity Metrics for Meaningful Change
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 5

Measuring equity gaps using demographic characteristics is an established method to identify where institutional policies and practice are not adequately supporting disadvantaged students. However, this method creates a proxy for disadvantage and often overlooks the root causes and sources of institutional accountability. This presentation explores the application of environmental metrics for disadvantage, how they complement demographic metrics, and what they can tell us about what an institution needs to do to create meaningful change.

Presenter(s): Summer Kenesson

Balancing Data and Well-Being: Thriving Amid Workload and Expectations
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 2 | Leadership & Career Development

In this follow-up to last year's session, "Balancing Data and Well-Being: Strategies for Self-care and Success," we dive deeper into the top stressors identified by higher education data professionals—workload, deadlines, and unclear expectations. Attendees will learn practical strategies for managing high-pressure demands, setting clear expectations, and maintaining personal well-being. Whether you are a veteran professional or new to the field, this session offers actionable tools for balancing your demanding role with self-care, allowing you to thrive in both work and life.

Presenter(s): Karen Egypt

Building Data Literacy: Creating a Developmental Program for Campus Staff
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Over the past three years, the Center for the Study of Student Life has developed programming aimed at fostering collaboration and bridging knowledge gaps between student affairs staff and institutional research professionals. This session will explore the reimagining of an initial multiweek assessment and data course into a year-long initiative focused on broad data literacy education for staff, and how the subsequent year-long initiative evolved into a community, with an annual calendar of sessions aimed at building data literacy. Participants will learn about the importance of building a data-informed culture, the role of continuous professional development, and the practical steps involved in creating data literacy programming at their own institutions. This session is designed to help attendees develop a framework for building staff capacity in data literacy, with a focus on improving data utilization across all areas of an institution.

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Presenter(s): Leah Halper; Marjorie Freggens

From Chaos to Clarity: Streamlining Reporting for Diverse Stakeholders
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Decision Support

As data demands grow, institutional research offices must navigate the challenge of delivering consistent and accurate reporting while accommodating the varying needs of campus stakeholders. At Indiana University, Institutional Analytics has developed a streamlined reporting tool designed to simplify the reporting of key institutional metrics, addressing common issues such as data fragmentation and dashboard overload. In this session, we will explore the limitations of traditional reporting methods and demonstrate how this new tool offers a user-friendly interface and modular data structure to reduce complexity. Attendees will gain insights into how the tool balances flexibility and precision, allowing for easy updates and clear data interpretation. By the end of the session, participants will have practical strategies for simplifying reporting processes and ensuring clarity and consistency in institutional data, improving decision-making across their institutions.

Presenter(s): Jesse Talley; Janice Childress

Lessons Learned From Multiagency Effort to Map the Teacher Pipeline
Speaker Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Preparing students to become teachers has been one of the foundational missions of universities for centuries. Georgia leaders wanted a data-centric view of the outcomes for students who start in teacher preparation majors and whether they graduate with a teaching degree, pass their certification exams, and go on to teach. This presentation will highlight efforts in the State of Georgia to knit together college enrollment and graduation data, licensure data, and employment data. Presenters will share the challenges of developing a four-agency data-sharing agreement, how the data were merged and configured for analysis, and share visualizations that highlight the patterns related to K-12 teacher preparation, graduation, licensure, and employment in the State of Georgia.

Presenter(s): David H. Tanner; Scott King; Angela Bell

Mixed-Methods Study of Career Stagnation Among Associate Professors
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Assessment & Evaluation

The presentation focuses on the results a mixed-methods study employed to investigate the factors associated with career stagnation among associate professors in rank for eight years or more. Nationally, this stagnation particularly affects women and people of color. Full professorship is often viewed as an important prerequisite for future opportunities and professional growth in academic leadership. Results suggested that the following were the major factors that affected associate professors' decisions not to seek promotion to full professor: not having enough time to devote to research in addition to teaching and service, feeling that their case was not strong enough with regard to research, concerns about work/life balance, and lack of support and mentoring from their department.. We will describe the action steps the university took to address the results of the study. Contributing Authors: Mitsu Narui – Ohio State University

Presenter(s): Michele J. Hansen

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One Report to Rule Them All? Balancing Customization and Consolidation
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Decision Support

Decision-makers at Indiana University have had access to a wide array of reports created by a variety of offices. This can be a great strength and a richness of resources. It can also be contradictory, even bewildering, and inefficient. After organizational changes implemented by new leaders, we now have a central Institutional Analytics team, plus data analysts embedded in campuses and departments. We are currently evaluating our reporting structures and environment, looking for duplications and inefficiencies, and seeking opportunities to streamline and consolidate. We have found times when centralizing reporting is compelling. Yet there are also times when it is imperative that teams and reports remain separate. We will present our insights and share how they can be applied to offices of any size, concluding with an audience discussion to tap into the collective wisdom of participants.

Presenter(s): Douglas K. Anderson; Bridgett Milner

Process and Technical Improvements to Support Four-Campus System Reporting
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

In October, the University of Missouri System Institutional Research and Effectiveness office engaged our four constituent campuses in our first effort to improve and streamline UM four-campus System Admissions and Enrollment reporting. After conducting a business process map, we scoped out a project to develop a PowerBI App to replace the existing processes. In this presentation, we will provide an overview of the BPM process and results; discuss the existing data architecture and improvements we developed; demo the app; and explain how we used PowerApps to improve and facilitate communication between campus Enrollment Managers and System leaders. We will outline how our communication and rollout plan contributed to adoption and success. We will outline the benefits including the elimination of manual processes; creation of supporting reports and a communication tool for campus Enrollment Managers; and availability of on-demand closer to real-time data. Contributing Authors: Misty Haskamp – Univers; Steve Winters – University of Missouri

Presenter(s): Daniel White; Myonghee Clara Choi

Program to Occupation Possibilities: Labor Market Information for Students
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Technology & Tools

The value of higher education and ROI (return on investment) are frequent news topics. Regardless of the purposes of higher education, students and others often want to know about employment possibilities. This session introduces labor market information (LMI) and describes how the University of Cincinnati engaged our labor market partner, Lightcast, and UC stakeholders to map academic programs to job possibilities and publish LMI on program websites via UC's academic program catalog (https://webapps2.uc.edu/ecurriculum/DegreePrograms/List) and the Lightcast widget. This presentation will cover (1) the role and value of labor market information (LMI) in higher ed; (2) how it aligns with University of Cincinnati values and goals; (3) engagement with critical partners (e.g., academic programs, Curricular Operations, IT unit, marketing and communication) to embed LMI data on academic program web pages; (4) job possibilities and actuals; (5) LMI widget usage and feedback; and

(6) LMI challenges and possibilities. Contributing Authors: Susana Luzuriaga Voight, University of Cincinnati; Adrian Hall, University of Cincinnati; Michelle Behaeghe, University of Cincinnati

Presenter(s): Steve Miller

SOS on SES: Capturing Student Socioeconomic Status PostFAFSA Revision
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Research & Policy

Now that FAFSA's EFC value has been replaced this year with the Student Aid Index (SAI), institutions are thinking critically about alternative measures to consistently compare SES of their students over time. We present this discovery and development process as done at a public four-year institution, and discuss where we went looking, the challenges with the measures already constructed, and the background construction of an SES indicator based on American Community Survey data. We also demo how it has been surfaced in a select group of our data products and discuss tips for integration into interactive dashboards.

Presenter(s): Katherine C. Gipalo; Samantha Nix

Successes and Challenges of Postsecondary Alumni Research
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Research & Policy

This session will provide an overview of the current best practices and common obstacles in conducting postsecondary alumni research. Examples will be drawn from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) survey administration. SNAAP has a long history of alumni data collection, beginning in 2008 and continuing today. SNAAP has made continuous improvements in collecting alumni data, revising practices to accommodate shifts in survey research approaches and the needs of the field. The session will discuss several challenges that arise in alumni research, including considerations of survey design, accurate population records and contact information, low response rates, and effective use of data once collected. Attendees can share their own successes and challenges of conducting alumni research, as well as how they might be using alumni data to improve their curricula, assessment, and outreach.

Presenter(s): Angie Miller

Supporting the Needs of Higher Education: AIR Data and Decisions Consulting
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3

In this session, we present an overview of AIR's newly formalized consulting work. We explore how these services support the needs of higher education, enhance AIR's mission, and honor the significant contributions of the IR/IE field to colleges and universities. Descriptions of recent and current projects will be provided.

Presenter(s): Jason Lewis; Leah Ross

The Power of Automating Processes: Enrollment Projection From Excel to SAS
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Decision Support

Process automation helps Institutional Research offices support data-informed decisions by improving efficiency and standardizing the approach to high-priority, repeated data requests. In this session, explore the automation project one Institutional Research office used to turn a manual, Excel-based enrollment projection into a SAS®-based process that begins with automated data pulls and ends with predetermined reporting output. Takeaways include lessons learned on project management, connecting with external databases, translating decision points into code, and designing automated report formats.

Presenter(s): Kelly D. Smith

Transfer Student Trends in a Large Community College District Over a Decade
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Decision Support

With a shift to an outcome-based funding model that prioritizes successful student transfers, this session presents findings from a comprehensive research project examining factors that contribute to community college students' transfer rates to four-year institutions. Using data from a large metropolitan community college district (Fall 2013 to Summer 2024) and the National Student Clearinghouse, the study explores predictors of upward transfer, focusing on student educational aspirations, demographics, financial aid, and academic records. This session will discuss statistical analysis and predictive modeling results, providing insights to help institutional research professionals develop data-driven strategies to support student transfer rates. Participants will gain a better understanding of the critical factors influencing student transfer rates and reflect on ways to improve data-informed institutional decision-making. Contributing Authors: Olivia Pietrzak – Dallas College

Presenter(s): Hongxia Fu; Zhiwei Zhen

Using R With Python to Extract Rubric Data From Canvas
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Technology & Tools

Accrediting bodies such as AAQEP, CACREP, and HLC emphasize assessing student learning through systematic analysis of outcomes, often using rubrics in LMS like Canvas. However, extracting and analyzing these data can be labor-intensive and error-prone. This presentation demonstrates how open-source tools like Posit (R) and Python can automate data extraction, consolidation, and analysis. We will showcase how to use the rCanvas package to access Canvas API data, extract rubric data with Python, and prepare it for dashboards in Shiny or PowerBI using the tidyverse. Participants will receive adaptable code to streamline the process, enabling more effective monitoring and enhancement of student learning, aligned with accreditation standards.

Presenter(s): Robert Paul Maddox

A Case Study of Data Visualization in Program Evaluation
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Assessment & Evaluation

Collaborating with program directors to determine the proper statistical analysis and data visualization for evaluation findings can be challenging. This session will focus on pre-post survey designs with closed and open-ended research questions. A case study will be presented on the evaluation practices of the Maximizing Access to Research Careers Program, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) at Georgia State University. This program aims to ignite and sustain interest and skills in scientific research, providing a direct path to PhD programs. Evaluation questions track student dispositions, skill awareness, and viewpoints on program helpfulness. Attendees will gain practical insights into using pre- and postresearch method designs. The session will guide attendees through selecting and conducting statistical analyses and data visualization for quantitative data, as well as applying machine learning for qualitative data to perform sentiment analysis and reporting in R. Contributing Authors: Kyle Frantz, Georgia State University

Presenter(s): Yingqi Wang

A Demand-Based Analysis of Undergraduate Business School Enrollment
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Decision Support

This session will explore undergraduate enrollment trends in AACSB-accredited business schools using the Theory of Student Demand. The main topics include (1) key factors influencing student enrollment (e.g., tuition, financial aid, labor market outcomes); (2) a 10-year analysis of enrollment trends using data from AACSB DataDirect; and (3) statistical methods (e.g., regression, time-series) to assess how factors like tuition affect enrollment. Attendees will gain (a) actionable insights into enrollment trends and student behavior; (b) tools to benchmark their school's performance against peers; and (c) data-driven strategies to optimize program offerings, tuition, and financial aid policies. The session aims to equip attendees with the skills to analyze enrollment trends; enable strategic decision-making for improving recruitment and retention; and promote data-driven policymaking for institutional success.

Presenter(s): Jie Zhang in Higher Education

Academic Metrics in Action: How Colleges Shape Data Dashboards for Impact
Speaker Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

A partnership between an academic college and the Information Technology Services department resulted in the development of a data dashboard that integrates university and external data, addressing the college's reporting needs. By leveraging live data, this project enables real-time decision-making on academic metrics, enrollment, and retention. This session highlights the role of the academic college in creating a dashboard to track program-specific metrics, offering insights from nontechnical stakeholders. Participants will gain tools for enhancing data governance, business intelligence, and collaboration to meet institutional goals, along with lessons learned from this initiative on cohort tracking and tailored metrics.

Presenter(s): Melissa A. Cardenas; Ehab Elmorsy; Dan Schellhas; Nick Savich

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Beyond Institution and State: The Changing Landscape of Higher Education
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Research & Policy

As the complexity of higher education continues to grow, there is an increasing need for more dynamic and comparative approaches to institutional research. This study leverages IPEDS data (2012–2023) to develop a comprehensive dashboard that tracks student enrollment trends, retention and graduation rates, and finance and tuition data across the United States. While many institutions are becoming more proficient in data-driven decision-making, most efforts are confined to local or institutional perspectives. However, it is equally critical to take a bird's-eye view and situate institutions and states within a broader regional and national context. By examining data from this higher vantage point, we can address opportunities and challenges that may not be fully captured or addressed by localized data alone. A key focus is on how IR professionals can design and develop robust data tools that offer multilayered, comprehensive insights to a variety of users.

Presenter(s): Lixia Qin

Building Institutional Culture for Career Outcomes
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

This session will detail how a small team from Career Services and Institutional Effectiveness inherited the task of relaunching and revitalizing career outcomes for the institution. Presenters will describe (1) how they collaboratively built an annual process for collection and reporting; (2) the distinct data sources used at strategic intervals within their timeline; and (3) how they are reshaping the university culture around outcomes. Examples of how these data are being presented to campus partners and senior leadership, and replicable templates will be shared.

Presenter(s): Genevieve Harclerode; Blase Masini

Building Your Data Restaurant: Establishing a Data and Analytics Strategy
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Decision Support

In today's higher education environment, establishing a data and analytics strategy is key to institutional success. Although many of us recognize its importance, we often struggle with ways to explain the concept and how to begin the journey. By utilizing an analogy equating the components of a data governance strategy with a restaurant kitchen, this session provides a framework for explaining somewhat complex concepts in nontechnical terms and provides an illustrative example of how the challenge of establishing a data and analytics strategy can be approached. From sourcing ingredients (identifying data sources) to building out the menu (developing a report catalog), the larger process can be broken down into smaller, more manageable steps. By using our own journey as an example, we will talk about the successes and challenges we have faced along the way and how improving partnerships with other offices on campus is helping advance our efforts to establish our data strategy.

Presenter(s): G Marc Turner; Carolina Jondron

Collaborative Strategies to Support Institutional Data Integrity
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Technology & Tools

With the constant demands of information and analytics on institutional researchers, timely, accurate, and relevant data sources are essential. Leveraging ETL processes required to ensure state and federal reporting compliance, we will demonstrate the evolution of data integrity workflows that identify key data errors in our information systems, deliver automated alerts to data stewards, and assist the IR staff with triaging and collaborating across the institution, resulting in our official census files. We will discuss lessons learned, feedback from our collaborators, and opportunities for future development. We will use the remaining time to open the floor to discussion and knowledge-sharing related to data governance practices at attendees' institutions. After attending this session, attendees will have the knowledge and tools to determine the applicability of implementing similar processes at their institutions.

Presenter(s): Michelle Smith; Kate Anderson

Connecting National Survey of Student Engagement Data to Collective Action
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Institutions' internal collaboration processes regarding data continue to be a main point of conversation for higher education researchers, practitioners, administrators, and stakeholders. Collective agreements on common institutional goals, whether through strategic plans or financial decisions, require a collaborative culture among stakeholders to achieve goals. However, there is often a disconnect between those who have access to data, those who want access to data, and/or those who have decision-making power in using data. In this session, we will discuss best practices for disseminating NSSE data, reports, and information across campus stakeholders to empower NSSE data users to leverage their student engagement results to (re)connect with various institutional entities and cohesively achieve common goals. Participants will leave with an understanding of the importance of taking collaborative action with NSSE-provided data and results in plans for institutional change.

Presenter(s): Christen Priddie; Jillian Kinzie; Allison BrckaLorenz

Developing an ROI Framework at the UNC System
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Assessment & Evaluation

The UNC System is embarking on a journey to measure and understand return on investment and workforce alignment. Many institutions and state systems face pressure from both internal and external constituents to provide evidence of the value of degrees produced in higher education but are unsure how to measure value. At the UNC System, we recently completed a Return on Investment Study through a third party and are working to build on the momentum of the project. The System is required to review all programs of study biennially, so we are building on the success of our ROI Study to create our own metrics and measures to track. This session is intended for novices and will provide an overview of ROI measures; describe data sources for these measures; weigh pros, cons, and challenges of different approaches; and describe how the UNC System plans to measure ROI.

Presenter(s): Mark Umbricht; Giana Malak

Fostering a Data-Informed Culture: IR's Role in Data Democratization
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

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IR professionals are uniquely positioned to lead data democratization—creating a data-informed culture where faculty, staff, and administrators can access and use data to make informed decisions. This session will explore how IR can enhance data democratization through strategic leadership, data governance, and cross-functional collaboration. Participants will discuss challenges and opportunities, focusing on practical strategies to increase data access, literacy, and responsible usage. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to help foster a transparent, data-informed decision-making culture at their institutions.

Presenter(s): Tara L. Webb

Harnessing Tech for Enhanced Data Analysis and Visualization in Higher Ed
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Technology & Tools

This session will explore innovative ways to leverage NSSE data using technologies for data analysis and visualization. Attendees will learn how to use Tableau Prep, Tableau, and Python for conducting detailed analyses and creating interactive dashboards. The session will include examples and case studies, providing a comprehensive and engaging learning experience.

Presenter(s): Abhishek Singh; Mohammed Moizuddin

IR/IE Strategies for Enhancing Nonacademic Program Effectiveness
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Assessment & Evaluation

In this session, participants will examine the essential role of IR/IE in assessing nonacademic programs and evaluating their effectiveness. The presentation will highlight that measuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of these programs requires concerted efforts to enhance data literacy, invest in appropriate technologies, foster a culture of data-informed decision-making, and ensure the strategic alignment of nonacademic program goals with institutional goals. Participants will gain actionable insights into leveraging data to enhance nonacademic program effectiveness, driving inclusivity and equity within the educational environment. Join us to learn how strategic data practices can advance nonacademic program assessment and contribute meaningfully to institutional success.

Presenter(s): Veena Dhankher

Leveraging Data Maturity: Aligning KPIs for Academic and Business Success
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Decision Support

This session explores how the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) is advancing its data strategy by aligning KPIs with a program health review cadence. Through collaboration between academic leadership and supporting departments, UMGC creates a holistic view of program assessment, focusing on four critical domains: academic content, academic outcomes, business viability, and marketability. By leveraging data maturity principles, UMGC developed a framework that sets attainable five-year KPI targets and sustains ongoing reviews. Session attendees will learn how data maturity and cross-departmental strategies can foster a data-informed culture, enhancing both institutional success and alignment between academic and business goals. The session offers practical steps to help attendees build collaboration, set realistic KPIs, and drive continuous improvement within their institutions. This session is ideal for professionals seeking to strengthen their data-informed decision-making framework.

Presenter(s): Bradley J. Coverdale

Overcoming Analysis Paralysis: Leveraging Data for Decisions
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

How can you help stakeholders shift from analysis paralysis to progress? How can you help stakeholders move from discussions to decisions? Learn practical and engaging strategies to strengthen stakeholders' usage of data for actionable next steps. These strategies offer a flexible framework for improving reliance on information from dashboards, survey findings, and other institutional research analyses for planning and decisions. The strategies are easily adaptable for facilitating meetings, making presentations, or hosting workshops. The strategies are important for increasing data use to advance strategic plan goals, improve outcomes, and compile accreditation evidence.

Presenter(s): Elisa Hertz; Nyssa Hasan; Teruo Yokoyama

Understanding Student Success with the PDP Analysis-Ready Data
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3

Institutions participating in the National Student Clearinghouse's Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) gain access to powerful student-level datasets known as Analysis-Ready (AR) files. These files combine insights from PDP course and cohort submissions with Clearinghouse enrollment and degree data, making them a rich resource for exploring student success. In this session, we introduce these AR files and their structure, purpose, and potential use cases. We then demonstrate a Power BI dashboard built using the Cohort AR file, featuring interactive visualizations on institutional characteristics, Gateway Course attempts and completions, credits earned, and time to completion. This session will help participants better understand how to use PDP data to inform decisions and improve student outcomes.

Presenter(s): Monte Schaff; Darlena Jones; Annalice Walker

4:30 PM - 5:15 PM

Automating Program Assessment Plans With LMS Data
Speaker Session | Sebastian L1+2 | Assessment & Evaluation

Program assessment is a crucial component of institutional planning and accreditation. However, the decentralized nature of program assessment often makes it a difficult process to manage, especially for small colleges and universities. Faculty may not have the training, time, or access to carry out assessment activities in a timely and systematic way. The institutional research office can play an important role in program assessment by streamlining the data collection process in program assessment, leaving faculty free to focus on the pedagogical and strategic issues raised by the data. The Goshen College IR office developed assessment plans for academic departments in the campus's self-service reporting system that automatically connected data from existing Student Information System (Jenzabar) and Learning Management System (Moodle) databases. The result was improved department participation rates in program assessment, better quality program data, and consistent report formatting.

Presenter(s): Justin Heinzekehr

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Beyond the Average: An Analytics Approach to Time-to-Degree
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Decision Support

This session explores the University at Buffalo's (UB) innovative approach to demystifying the complexities of time-to-degree metrics for graduate students through advanced data analytics. By developing both public-facing and internal dashboards, UB has enhanced transparency around admissions, enrollment, and degree-completion trends, empowering data-driven decision-making and improving institutional effectiveness. Attendees will discover how these tools provide campus stakeholders with actionable insights while helping prospective students understand degree timelines and make informed choices. Key takeaways include strategies for integrating diverse data sources, leveraging Tableau to create dynamic visualizations, and fostering cross-campus collaboration to support student success and optimize program outcomes.

Presenter(s): Shannon Mahany-Kulinski; Mychal Ostuni

Documentation and the Process Manual: Mitigating Effects of Staff Turnover
Speaker Session | Panzacola F3 | Leadership & Career Development

Staff turnover can cripple small IR/IE offices as institutional knowledge leaves with departing staff. This session discusses strategies that IR/IE offices can employ to reduce or eliminate the negative effects of staff departure and help get new staff up to speed in a quick, efficient manner. The session centers around the creation of an IR/IE office process manual. We will discuss data dictionaries, reporting calendars, how to create a good user guide, how to structure code so it is usable by others, and good practices for commenting code.

Presenter(s): Nick Irby

Engaging Stakeholders in Data-Driven Decision-Making for Student Success
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

This session will introduce how Delaware County Community College (DCCC) transformed its decision-making culture by shifting stakeholders from waiting for lengthy data reports to taking a proactive approach in gaining insights through data. Through innovative guidance and support from the Institutional Research (IR) office, deans, faculty, and staff are now empowered to independently access and analyze data, enabling them to make informed, real-time decisions that improve student success and institutional effectiveness. Attendees will learn how the IR team's strategies, utilizing advanced technology, fostered a culture of engagement where stakeholders actively use data to track retention, analyze course success, and identify early signs of student challenges. This session offers valuable insights for professionals seeking to encourage proactive, data-driven decision-making within their institutions.

Presenter(s): Wenjun Chi

Leveraging Qualtrics Interactive Dashboards for Data-Driven Decision-Making
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Decision Support

In today's data-driven world, institutions are increasingly pressured to make informed decisions based on data and evidence. Clear and actionable insights from survey data are essential for improving services and enhancing institutional effectiveness. As institutions seek to improve student outcomes, optimize resources, and enhance services, survey platforms like Qualtrics become invaluable. This session demonstrates the step-by-step process of building interactive dashboards within Qualtrics, transforming survey data (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) into actionable visualizations that inform decision-making.

Presenter(s): Wei You

Leveraging Sentiment Analysis for Improved Student Outcomes
Speaker Session | Panzacola F2 | Technology & Tools

This session examines the role of sentiment analysis and opinion mining in education, emphasizing how these technologies can enhance student outcomes, foster learner engagement, and inform institutional strategies. Participants will explore various sentiment levels, annotation techniques, and the application of AI in educational prediction models. Ethical considerations, including data privacy, bias, and accuracy, will also be addressed, providing attendees with strategies for responsibly implementing sentiment analysis in their institutions. Attendees will learn about methods such as machine learning and natural language processing (NLP) tools like NLTK and spaCy, alongside key educational data sources. By the end of the session, participants will have a solid understanding of sentiment analysis, including insights derived from course evaluations and student feedback, equipping them to effectively interpret sentiments and enhance educational experiences for all stakeholders.

Presenter(s): Juhi Chadha

Micro-Surveys: A Strengths-Based Tool to Collect Student Feedback
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Assessment & Evaluation

Dedicated to student success, The University of Findlay endeavors to build a more accurate, authentic picture of the student experience. For example, instead of focusing on negative retention factors (why students leave), we dig into positive factors (what keeps first-year students engaged and satisfied). However, we can't sit down with each student to explore their personal level of satisfaction or send out lengthy weekly surveys. Thus, our micro-survey concept was born. Although brief, these targeted pulse surveys pack a serious data-rich punch. The presentation will include survey development, targeted timing, question selection, efficient implementation, and effective data reporting (closing the loop). The pulse survey structure can be applied to any student learning outcomes feedback collection, resulting in meaningful, time-sensitive assessment.

Presenter(s): Kristen R. Lindsay

The LEADing Edge of IR
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3

This session explores the central ideas around AIR LEADs (Leadership with Evidence, Analytics, and Data) to provide prospective participants a taste of the course. We will engage together in an activity focused on one of those ideas.

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Presenter(s): Jeremy Goodman; Drew Kelly

The Linguistic Labyrinth: Modern AI Natural Tools for Education Decisions
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 6 | Technology & Tools

This practitioner talk will describe OCAS' experiments with natural language tools for applicants and explorers of Ontario post-secondary programs, based on program and labour market data using a variety of modern AI tools and techniques. We include both structured college program data and unstructured natural language data, and link college programs to detailed job data and taxonomies. This talk will outline the market needs, our process, outcomes, and early validation of natural language tools meant to support research and decision making for post-secondary applicants. The highlight of the talk will be a demonstration of the current state of natural language tools, their validation process, and a glimpse into OCAS's future developments. The session aims to impart practical knowledge on leveraging natural language data alongside structured data, offering actionable insights and recommendations for organizations embarking on similar natural language prototyping endeavors.

Presenter(s): Nadia Novikova

The National Student Clearinghouse ABCs of FVT-GE ROI
Speaker Session | Sebastian L3+4 | Assessment & Evaluation

During this exciting compliance reporting session, the National Student Clearinghouse will cover lessons learned during the first round of Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment reporting, how we are applying those lessons to a more streamlined reporting process for the 2025 cycle, and ways in which schools can start preparing now to best position themselves for the annual FVT-GE reporting requirements.

Presenter(s): Sean A. McTighe

Tracking Graduate Student Success: A Cohort-Based Analysis
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Decision Support

In response to the request from the Office of Graduate Studies, the Office of Decision Support at University of South Florida has created a dashboard suite for Graduate Student Success. This suite includes two dashboards that feature Doctoral Student Success and Master's Student Success respectively. These dashboards provide valuable insights and data to help support the success of our graduate students. In this presentation, we will discuss the metrics used to track graduate students' progression through degree completion using a cohort-based analysis and the methodology used to create these metrics. Participants are invited to share perspectives on factors impacting graduate student success at their institutions. This session promises to be valuable for any four-year institutions that offer graduate level programs or any stakeholders who are interested in the success of graduate students. Contributing Authors: Zheng Zhong and Sangita Singh, University of South Florida

Presenter(s): Xiaoying Liu; Shruti Kumar

Uncovering Paths From Engagement to Retention: Across Pandemic Phases
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Assessment & Evaluation

Explore the evolution of student engagement patterns across prepandemic, pandemic, and postpandemic periods using National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data. This session employs Latent Class Analysis (LCA) and mediation modeling to uncover how these patterns influence student retention through satisfaction with their institution. Understanding these dynamic shifts is crucial for developing adaptive strategies to enhance student support systems. Attendees will learn to apply LCA, evaluate complex pathways with mediation modeling, and develop tailored support strategies. This session offers actionable insights for academic advising, student support programs, and monitoring systems, contributing significantly to the field of Institutional Research.

Presenter(s): Jemma Kwon

Understanding Multiracial Student Data: Recommendations for Data Collection and Reporting
Speaker Session | Panzacola F1 | Research & Policy

As the multiracial population grows at a rapid pace in the United States, it is important for higher education institutions to leverage data to better understand the experiences of multiracial students. However, data on multiracial students in higher education remain limited, often grouping these students into a broad "catch-all" category that obscures their unique experiences. Recent updates to federal race and ethnicity standards (Statistical Policy Directive No.15) from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), provide a pivotal moment to better understand and represent multiracial students in higher education. This IHEP-led presentation will focus on (1) an overview of the new federal race and ethnicity standards and its impacts for multiracial students; (2) a review of current data availability on multiracial students, and recommendations and considerations for data users; and (3) strategies for institutions to harness these data to inform policy and practice.

Presenter(s): Lauren McLeese; Kim Dancy

Unlocking Insights: Rapid Qualitative Data Analysis With Copilot
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Technology & Tools

Analyzing qualitative data and taking immediate action is crucial for impacting institutional outcomes. Join us for an insightful session on the power of Copilot in converting raw qualitative data into meaningful insights. Whether you are an experienced Copilot user or new to generative AI, this session will equip you with the knowledge and techniques to leverage AI for rapid understanding and impactful decision-making. Session highlights include (1) effective prompts—learn how to craft prompts for swift and accurate qualitative data analysis using Copilot and (2) real-world applications—discover how Copilot has been used to uncover faculty and student perceptions of AI and provide valuable feedback on faculty development programs. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your Copilot skills and explore the potential of AI-powered, rapid qualitative analysis. Join us and take the first step towards unlocking the full potential of your qualitative data.

Presenter(s): Marissa Green-Francescon

Data Literacy Evolved: Thinking Differently About Your Stakeholders
Panel Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Collaborating with Stakeholders

Who knew that building the analytic platform and tools would be the easy part? Most of us know how hard it is to get people to change their behaviors and embrace new ways of doing business! Additionally, data consumers bring with them a wide range of data understanding, skills, and literacy, presenting some of the most common and difficult challenges to providing actionable decision support across campus. It's time for data literacy practices to evolve from a one-size-fits-all approach to a more customized approach. In this session, we will share the challenges we have encountered in identifying and supporting key stakeholders: data avoidant, data novice, data overconfident, data fluent, and data superuser. We will offer three different perspectives on how to identify these groups and support their use of data and growth in data literacy skills supported by research-based best practices. Data literacy assessment tools and support practices will be discussed and shared.

Presenter(s): Loralyn Taylor; Jason Simon

CAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Panzacola H2
Presenter(s): Pamela Ong

CIRPA Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Wekiwa 3
Presenter(s): Miranda Pearson

INAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Sebastian I3
Presenter(s): Adrea L. Hernandez

MAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Wekiwa 6
Presenter(s): Tara L. Webb

OAIRP Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Panzacola H4
Presenter(s): Lindsay Balliet

OCAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Panzacola H1
Presenter(s): Jennifer X. Wu

PNAIRP Affiliated Organization Meeting
Affiliated Organization Meeting | Wekiwa 5
Presenter(s): Allyson Meyers

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TAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting

Affiliated Organization Meeting | Sebastian I4
Presenter(s): Morgan M. Carter

US News/IR Advisory Committee Auxiliary Meeting

Auxiliary Meeting | Wekiwa 4
Presenter(s): Rana Glasgal

VAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting

Affiliated Organization Meeting | Panzacola H3
Presenter(s): Chris Orem

Friday, May 23, 2025

Applying Design-Based Thinking to Surveys to Foster Institutional Change
Speaker Session | Sebastian I4 | Decision Support

Given the many pressures on higher education, how can we increase organizational flexibility within our institutions to evolve to meet the needs of our current and future students? Student surveys are a longstanding tool for institutional researchers to use to foster understanding and change. At Bowdoin College, the Office of Institutional Research, Analytics and Consulting partnered with the Office of Inclusion and Diversity to create an experimental survey program, the Polar Bear Feedback Team, to hasten the survey feedback loop. With the concepts from human-centered design thinking, such as empathy and prototyping, the Polar Bear Feedback Team works with campus partners to improve the experiences, services, and programs for students. Contributing Authors: Christina Finneran, Bowdoin College

Presenter(s): Christina M. Finneran; Chloe Qian

Are We the Champions? Determining How to Measure Effectiveness in IR
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Leadership & Career Development

IR Offices are generally involved in measuring their institution's performance, yet it can sometimes be challenging to apply the same performance measurement techniques to assess their own performance. This presentation reviews literature on best strategies for performance measurement and assesses its application to the IR field. Researchers developed an initial set of recommendations and then conducted focus groups within a public four-year institution's IR office. This qualitative feedback was then analyzed and used to edit the initial recommendations to a finalized set to implement. This presentation aims to provide IR offices with a literature-based framework to define what is expected of their offices, measure whether their offices are achieving their goals, and use that information to inform their practice. Contributing Authors: Tanya Thatayatikom, Cheyenne Croft, and Ciera Merritt – Florida State University

Presenter(s): Katherine C. Gipalo; Jeckson De Andrade Silva

Development of an Instrument to Evaluate Course Design and Faculty Teaching
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3 | Assessment & Evaluation

The project aimed to create a valid and reliable tool for evaluating course design and faculty teaching. This presentation provides a roadmap for revising course evaluation instruments using Lynda Gratton's four-step framework (2022): (1) Understand What Matters: Identify challenges in developing a valid evaluation form; (2) Reimagine New Ways of Operating: Explore innovative approaches; (3) Model and Test New Ways of Working: Implement strategies within the organization; and (4) Act and Create: Utilize feedback from current data. The revised evaluation form was piloted in Fall 2023, with adjustments made in Spring 2024. Eleven courses participated in pilot study over the academic year, although not all were offered each semester. Results showed positive feedback, with strong correlations between the course evaluation questionnaires (CEQs) and faculty evaluation questionnaires (FEQs), as well as between the original and revised forms and between the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 results.

Contributing Authors: Mary Regan – University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Nursing

Presenter(s): Lynn Chen; Susan Antol

FERPA in Practice: Lessons for IR From USDE Action Letters
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Technology & Tools

FERPA is the bedrock of student data privacy protection in the United States. But while statute and regulation establish IR offices' data protection responsibilities, those responsibilities are operationalized in action by USDE in the form of action letters. This session presents the results of a comprehensive documentary review of USDE action since the 1980s, providing a holistic picture of FERPA in practice. The review focuses on describing USDE's typical process for responding to complaints; elaborating USDE's understanding of key FERPA provisions, especially where these shape responsibilities that are not explicitly stated in statute or regulation; identifying data practices that USDE has consistently found to be permitted by or in violation of FERPA; and characterizing the overall long-term stability of USDE's interpretation of FERPA. While the presentation describes typical USDE administration action, it does not provide statutory interpretation or legal advice.

Presenter(s): Jeffrey A. Johnson

First-Gen Facts and Figures: Trends and Early Data From the COVID-19 Pandemic
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Research & Policy

As of 2020, over half of all college students in the United States were first-generation, updating previous findings that first-generation college students make up just one-third of the total college student population. In this session, FirstGen Forward will discuss the latest findings regarding national data on first-generation student success trends and their early experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic using data from the National Center for Education Statistics Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:12/17), Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:16/20), and the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20). From demographics, enrollment characteristics, and degree completion outcomes, to an initial look at the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on this population, the data discussed will provide ample evidence of the need to do more to support first-generation students and graduates.

Presenter(s): Mary Fugate

From Data Centralization to Data Utilization for Strategic Decision-Making
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Decision Support

Bringing data from disparate sources together for an enterprise-wide data solution is a tall and noteworthy task on its own, but ensuring these data can and will be consumed in ways that inform strategic decision-making for the institution is the vital next step in this journey. This presentation will discuss how Carnegie Mellon moved from creating an enterprise-wide data solution for graduate admissions data housed in sixteen different systems to working with stakeholders to create iterative data products that provide answers to strategic questions that were previously unanswerable. Attendees will learn how we completed the process of addressing a data risk for the university and created dashboards using stakeholder feedback that improve enterprise-wide data integrity, providing a comprehensive view

from application to enrollment, and aiding in strategic decision-making. Contributing Authors: Josephine Dru, Carnegie Mellon University

Presenter(s): Zoraya Cruz-Bonilla; Melissa Baker

From Silos to Solutions: Unifying Data Systems to Promote Student Success
Speaker Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Decision Support

This session explores integrating and organizing multiple data sources and applying advanced analytics to model student behavior and performance, with the goal of enhancing decision-making within Student Affairs and promoting student success. We will examine challenges in data organization, consolidation, and management, focusing on how institutions can turn fragmented student engagement data into actionable insights. This includes data from student organizations, recreation and wellness programs, tutoring, and academic advising. Practical applications include predicting student achievement and evaluating which programs and services most impact students' sense of belonging and overall success. Attendees will gain insights into how to leverage multiple data sources to foster evidence-based decision-making, improve student outcomes, and optimize resource allocation to enhance institutional effectiveness and support student success.

Presenter(s): Keith Rogers; Qingmin Shi

Harnessing Machine Learning to Improve the Student Recruitment Process
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Technology & Tools

As an open enrollment community college, Ivy Tech receives over 150,000 applications every year across 19 campuses. Enrollment teams at each campus have limited recruitment specialists, and they divide and process applications for outreach. With a predictive approach, our goal was to prioritize the applications of new first-time or transfer students in the order of conversion likelihood. We studied student level predictors such as involvement, responsiveness, and demographics and built a model using machine-learning techniques. Our model provided a prediction accuracy of 88%, and the administration has found value thus far even early in deployment. In this presentation, we will share learnings and strategies that we leveraged to address real-world considerations such as iterative model improvements; reacting to changes in upstream/downstream data; data quality and performance monitoring; training enrollment teams to interpret data; and diversity and equity in predictive modeling.

Presenter(s): Asawaree Kulkarni; Tim Kish

Introduction to Data Architecture: From Kimball to Data Vault
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 4 | Technology & Tools

One of the key decisions when revamping or building a new data infrastructure is the data architecture. Many IR offices are facing the need to revamp legacy data warehouses or to create new data infrastructure after migration to new source systems (i.e., Workday, Banner SaaS). It is critical that IR professionals get involved in the process and understand key concepts to talk with IT or with consultants to ensure the new data infrastructure fulfills IR's data needs. This session will cover key concepts and terminology used in data architecture. A brief history of data architecture will include Inmon, Kimball models, and Data Vaults. In this session we will discuss key concepts and differences between databases,

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DataMarts, data warehouses, data lakes, data lakehouses, and data mesh. Tools for automatization of data warehousing like RED, 3D, and Data Vault Express will be also discussed. No prior background in computer science is needed.

Presenter(s): Nancy Becerra-Cordoba

Photovoice: An Innovative Method in Institutional Research
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Assessment & Evaluation

This presentation will highlight the value of participatory research methods in institutional research, with a focus on the photovoice methodology. Photovoice is a qualitative research method in which participants (in our case, students) use photography to document their experiences, make meaning through group discussions, and advocate for community (campus) change. As a participatory research method, students are considered equal collaborators in the research process. This represents a shift from most methods within institutional research, in which students are often considered the subjects of research, but rarely partners. Presenters will highlight photovoice projects implemented on their campus, including projects related to the experiences of first-generation students and neurodivergent students. Presenters will share an overview of the photovoice process, ways in which projects can be adapted for different purposes, and the impact seen from their various projects.

Presenter(s): Margaret Munley Stone

Predictive Modeling for Enhancing Upward Student Transfer Success
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Research & Policy

Community colleges play a vital role in preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions and supporting baccalaureate degree completion. This discussion-based session, part of a broader transfer-student research project, analyzes data from the National Student Clearinghouse and a large metropolitan community college district spanning 10 years and nearly half a million students to explore factors influencing degree attainment after transfer. Discussion leaders will present four predictive models and their testing results before opening the floor to participants to explore challenges and solutions in data management, feature selection, model optimization, and effectively communicating findings to policymakers. The session aims to foster collaboration on best practices for designing, testing, and deploying predictive models to inform resource allocation and strategic planning for building students' academic and personal capital, ultimately improving degree-completion rates.

Presenter(s): Hongxia Fu; Zhiwei Zhen

9:00 AM - 9:45 AM

Accidental Harm: Discovering Process Inequity Through Debt Forgiveness
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 3 | Decision Support

As part of a new debt forgiveness policy, Oakland Community College investigated the total debt owed by students, both in collections and with just institutional debt. In conducting this analysis, the college wanted to disaggregate the data by demographic indicators and in doing so uncovered a stark inequity in the data. Upon further reflection, the college uncovered several policy issues that contributed to this. The information uncovered in this accidental discovery unveiled a blind spot in college operations that

substantially changed the way the institution was pursuing some of its student equity initiatives. This presentation will (1) share the story of this process of discovery; (2) share the methods and analysis used; and (3) discuss the larger institutional impact and policy changes that followed. This presentation will be relevant to anyone wrestling to improve the equity of student outcomes at their organization.

Presenter(s): Steven M. Simpson

Admission Yield Modeling: A Feature of Comprehensive Enrollment Management
Speaker Session | Panzacola H2 | Decision Support

Achieving enrollment targets in higher education is increasingly complex due to evolving policy changes, shifting demographics, and unexpected internal and external factors. Effectively managing yield and melt rates is essential for successful admission strategies; otherwise, institutions risk under- or over-enrollment. This proposal introduces a robust admission yield modeling framework, using machine learning and other approaches, to help navigate challenges. The model analyzes yield and melt rates from historical data to provide enrollment insights. It projects anticipated acceptances and recommends the optimal offer numbers for the current cycle to meet census targets at a high level of granularity—across majors, residency, etc. By delivering comprehensive and detailed projections, coupled with daily tracking, this model empowers enrollment management teams to develop informed strategies, respond to evolving real-time trends, and achieve enrollment goals.

Presenter(s): Tam Nguyen; Rob Hopkins

Bridging Equity Gaps: Data-Informed Strategies for Student Success
Speaker Session | Sebastian I3 | Assessment & Evaluation

Harper College has made significant strides in closing equity gaps between white students and students of color through equity-focused initiatives. This session provides a review of our institution's DEI strategic goals aimed at addressing persistent equity gaps in student success metrics. Our presentation will highlight (1) strategies that improved Black student outcomes in developmental math and writing; (2) discussion of universal increases in gateway course success and shifting equity gaps; (3) initiatives that boosted Black students' persistence by 12%; and (4) improvements in graduation rates for Black and Latinx students. Attendees will gain critical insights into effective strategies for identifying and narrowing equity gaps in community college settings, including challenges faced and lessons learned in pursuit of equitable student outcomes. By sharing our findings, we aim to equip institutional researchers with actionable insights to foster more equitable learning environments in higher education.

Presenter(s): Anna Strati; Ron Serio; Jacob Demos

Campus Politics: Cluster Analysis of Student Engagement and Political Views
Speaker Session | Panzacola H4 | Decision Support

College campuses have long been a battleground for culture wars, ranging from antiwar and civil rights protests in the 1960s to encampment protests regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, and state legislative actions regarding tenure and curricula. Yet, many large-scale surveys tend to avoid questions of political views or affiliation, potentially leaving institutions in the dark on its relation to belonging, inclusion, and engagement. This session will report survey results from additional questions on the National Survey of

Student Engagement in the spring of 2024, including students' intention to vote and their views on a number of social issues. Relationships between these views, student engagement, and belonging will be explored. This session will use statistical clustering to validate self-identified political views and demonstrate the process and advantages of the technique to reduce lengthy survey data into more manageable features and help identify student subgroups.

Presenter(s): Brendan Dugan; James Cole

Curriculum Analytics: Partnerships, Curated Data, and Visualizations
Speaker Session | Panzacola H3 | Decision Support

This session will feature the University at Buffalo (UB) Analytics Team's innovative approach to undergraduate curriculum analytics. In partnership with the Undergraduate Education Office, an analytics strategy was developed to transform raw data into actionable intelligence for enhanced decision support. Central to this strategy are curated datasets, visual analytics, and continuous collaboration with campus stakeholders to inform and refine both data and visual designs. Attendees will learn how advanced analytics are applied for areas such as course-demand forecasting, degree-requirement monitoring, enrollment-pattern recognition, and more. Key takeaways include data-blending techniques, leveraging Tableau for visual analytics, and forging partnerships. Together this strategy has helped strengthen decision intelligence at UB in supporting student success and outcomes.

Presenter(s): Mychal Ostuni

Interactive Dashboard Design: Initial Effort, Maximum Insight
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Sebastian I4

This session provides a thorough foundation for conceptualizing the process of turning data into information through interactive data visualization. The presentations focuses on identifying audiences served, common data sources, and design techniques to maximize the utility of these products across constituents with a focus on applying an equity lens.

Presenter(s): Eric Atchison

Kudos or Alert: Academic Progress Reports and Student Outcomes
Speaker Session | Wekiwa 5 | Assessment & Evaluation

The University of South Carolina has implemented academic progress reports for undergraduate courses that are historically difficult or supported by academic services, including supplemental instruction and peer tutoring. Instructors submit progress reports at key points during the semester (e.g., four-to-six-week mark and before WF deadline), and students who receive 'alerts' are provided with opportunities for additional support. This session will explore the relationship between the academic progress reports and students' outcomes in the associated courses, the likelihood of receiving 'alert' reports in future semesters, and the relationship between academic progress reports and persistence. Findings include increased likelihood of earning an ABC when instructors submit progress reports, increased likelihood of earning an ABC when responding to outreach for support, and increased likelihood of earning an A when recognized for improved performance.

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Presenter(s): Keah Tandon

Leveraging Predictive Analytics in the Cloud: A New Era for Student Success
Speaker Session | Panzacola H1 | Technology & Tools

In this session, we will share our experience of transforming a student-retention predictive model from a vendor-supported model to an internally developed model using cutting edge cloud computing resources. We will focus on how newly available tools and technologies in cloud computing platforms can be successfully leveraged to develop and test student-success prediction modeling, and some of the challenges and pitfalls we encountered during our implementation. These include developing the necessary integrations and ingestions from source systems into our data lake and database development to preprocess and stage data for model training, feature engineering, model specification, data visualization, and dashboard development. We will also share input we have received from our student case-management team and associate deans who served as beta testers of the dashboards. Finally, we will discuss how we plan to leverage the same process for additional predictive models going forward.

Presenter(s): Diana A. Lomelin; Brandon Hutton; Matthew Hoolsema

Not Just Another HIP Dashboard! Enhancing Insights and Action Planning
Speaker Session | Sebastian I1+2 | Decision Support

Although participation in High-Impact Practices (HIPs) has been widely advocated as an effective strategy for enhancing active learning, student persistence, and engagement, tracking actual HIP participation rates and outcomes on large campuses over multiple years can be challenging due to siloed data sources, lack of HIP information in centralized data warehouse environments, and unclear data governance and stewardship of HIP-related data. This session focuses on the development of a HIP Dashboard that represented a collaborative approach to creating an integrated data source allowing for a deeper understanding of HIP participation longitudinally, scaffolding HIPs, and the differential impacts on student success across a range of student demographics and subpopulations.

Presenter(s): Michele J. Hansen; Katie Smillie; Jay Johnson; Negash Negash

The Path to Your Next Data Role in Higher Ed: Chief Data Officer
Discussion Group | Wekiwa 1 | Leadership & Career Development

The role of Chief Data Officer (CDO) in higher education is becoming increasingly common, but it remains one of the least understood positions. Across the higher education landscape, the CDO role varies widely in terms of reporting lines, authority, accountability, and scope of work, making it a complex position for which to prepare. Differences in institution type, size of the CDO office, and areas of responsibility contribute to the diversity of this role, creating challenges for individuals aspiring to step into it. This session will examine existing CDO position descriptions and analyze the different reporting structures, scopes of work, and organizational contexts within higher education. Discussions will explore the skill sets required for success across various CDO structures and the experiences that prepare individuals for this evolving leadership role. Attendees will leave with a better understanding of what it takes to be on the path for a future CDO role in higher education.

Presenter(s): Reena Khosla; Heather Novak

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Work Smarter, Stay Longer? Student Jobs and Retention
Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Wekiwa 4

This session will provide information on different types of campus-based student work opportunities, including Federal Work study, and how patterns within key student populations have changed at SIUE over time. Additionally, it will provide descriptive and predictive results centered on the relationship between different types of student work and first to second year retention.

Presenter(s): Joe Feigl; Eric Lichtenberger

9:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Closing Keynote
Keynote | Gatlin A/B

9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Brunch buffet and keynote seating
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Program and Closing Keynote Panel

Adapting to Change: Higher Education Policy Updates and Implications
In a rapidly changing policy environment, this session will provide the AIR community with timely updates on key federal higher education policy developments, including changes at the Department of Education, federal data collections, executive orders, and the evolving regulatory landscape. Expert panelists will explore the implications of these shifts for institutions and the broader postsecondary sector, offering insights into challenges and opportunities ahead.

Panel
Diane Cheng (Institute for Higher Education Policy—IHEP)
Bryan Cook (Urban Institute)
Jonathan Fansmith (American Council on Education)
Moderator
Christine Keller (Association for Institutional Research)