



WASHINGTON, D.C.  
May 26-29, 2026  
Pre-Conference: May 25-26, 2026

# Program Guide

May 26 – May 29, 2026

ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

# Monday, May 25, 2026

*Pre-Conference Education*

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Another Tool in the Toolkit: Learn R for Institutional Research (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

*Pre-Conference Sessions | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine)*

R is an open-source and free technology that offers tools to wrangle, analyze, and visualize data in one platform, helping to streamline analytics work. For those interested in adding another tool to their institutional research toolkit, this workshop will provide basic and introductory training in R. In this workshop, participants will set up R and R Studio, will learn how R can be useful in their IR work, and will be introduced to R's analytic and visualization tools. Participants will practice using these tools with real-time coding throughout the workshop. The workshop will also introduce advanced uses of R, such as creating written reports and slides, for those interested in continuing their R journey beyond the workshop.

**Presenter(s):** Marianne Bujacich;

Data Don't Speak: Using Communication and Context for Decision Making (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

*Pre-Conference Sessions | George Washington University Room (ML1)*

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;

Foundations Bootcamp: The Cornerstone for Any IR/IE Professional (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

*Pre-Conference Sessions | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine)*

Institutional research/effectiveness 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/IE, answering questions is not helpful if inquiries don't illuminate the true knowledge sought. Data 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

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exploration of IR/IE'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 data professional. The workshop starts with a question and sees an IR/IE 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;

The Art and Science of Managing an IR Office (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)  
*Pre-Conference Sessions | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine)*

Most IR/IE 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 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 is the experience for you.

**Presenter(s):** Jessica Shedd;

1:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Admissions Analytics Bootcamp using Google Colab and Vibe Coding (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)  
*Pre-Conference Sessions | Tulip Room (Mezzanine)*

Transform your career with in-demand admissions analytics skills using Google Colab and innovative Vibe Coding techniques. This hands-on bootcamp introduces Python programming and machine learning through real higher education scenarios with no coding experience required. Get hands-on experience with admission rate calculations, explore yield prediction concepts, and build your first machine learning model. This foundational workshop provides a taste of modern analytics capabilities with code examples and clear pathways for advancing these skills further. Technology requirements: Google account and web browser with no software installation required.

**Presenter(s):** Juan Carlos Apitz; Mahmoud Albawaneh; Tammy Dupuy

I Have a New Job in IR...Now What? (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)  
*Pre-Conference Sessions | Mint Room (ML4)*

This informative and interactive workshop is designed for individuals who are new to the field of institutional research. We review the typical roles and responsibilities associated with IR, highlight useful resources, and learn how to develop connections with others in the field.

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Scenario Modeling in Power BI: Turning Data into Decisions (WORKSHOP IS FULL)  
*Pre-Conference Sessions | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine)*

Institutional leaders frequently ask: “What happens if...?” What if GPA cutoffs were raised, department budgets shifted by 5%, or enrollment grew differently across majors? This interactive workshop shows how to answer those questions with Power BI’s scenario modeling tools. Attendees will learn how to create parameters, connect them to outcomes using DAX, and design dashboards that allow decision makers to test assumptions in real time. Through three higher education–specific cases—admissions criteria modeling, budget planning with percentage adjustments, and enrollment/revenue forecasting—participants will gain hands-on practice and leave with reusable templates for their own campuses. The session is designed for institutional research professionals seeking to expand their toolkit for supporting evidence-based decision making.

**Presenter(s):** Sarah Gallimore;

# Tuesday, May 25, 2026

*Pre-Conference Education*

8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Cracking the Black Box: Making AI Work for Institutional Research (WORKSHOP IS FULL)  
*Pre-Conference Sessions | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine)*

The growth of predictive analytics and machine learning (ML) has transformed higher education research and student success initiatives. However, traditional ML models often operate as “black boxes,” raising concerns about bias, transparency, and accountability in decision-making. Explainable AI (XAI) provides a pathway toward interpretable, transparent, and responsible use of predictive modeling in institutional research and student outcomes. This pre-conference workshop equips participants with conceptual grounding, hands-on experience, and practical frameworks to apply XAI in higher education. Through interactive coding demonstrations and collaborative discussion, participants will learn how to balance predictive accuracy with interpretability to support ethical and effective decision-making.

**Presenter(s):** Linli Zhou

Data Don't Speak: Using Communication and Context for Decision Making (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)  
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**Presenter(s):** Mary Ann Coughlin;

Foundations Bootcamp: The Cornerstone for Any IR/IE Professional (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)  
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effective in this field. It is an extension of AIR's highly successful virtual Foundations series and an essential experience for any data professional. The workshop starts with a question and sees an IR/IE 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;

Fundamentals of Enrollment Forecasting (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)  
*Pre-Conference Sessions | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine)*

In this workshop, participants gain a practical introduction to enrollment forecasting tailored for higher education institutions. We explore a range of forecasting approaches, with a focus on straightforward models that are accessible and easy to implement—regardless of institutional size or resources.

Participants learn best practices for building forecasting processes that foster collaboration across campus, enhance transparency, and build trust in the results. We'll also cover effective communication strategies to ensure your forecasts are clearly understood by stakeholders at all levels of the institution.

**Presenter(s):** Chris Orem;

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

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.

You will depart the workshop with a Change Readiness Toolkit that includes a facilitation guide for use at your institution, strategies for stakeholder engagement, and a roadmap for implementation. AIR's goal is for IR/IE professionals to have the confidence, mindsets, knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead change and help ensure that critical resources like data and analytics become catalysts for change.

**Presenter(s):** Jessica Shedd;

Mastering Power BI Visual Development: From Data to Storytelling (WORKSHOP IS FULL)  
*Pre-Conference Sessions | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine)*

Power BI dashboards are powerful tools for decision-making, yet many users struggle to design visuals that are both clear and actionable. This half-day workshop provides a practical, end-to-end framework for creating effective dashboards. Participants will learn how to connect and model data, select

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appropriate chart types and color palettes, and apply accessibility best practices to make dashboards usable for diverse audiences. The session also explores advanced techniques such as SVG visuals, interactivity, and storytelling strategies that transform dashboards from collections of charts into compelling narratives. Additional focus will be given to paginated reports, demonstrating how they complement dashboards for specific reporting needs. Finally, participants will practice publishing and sharing in the Power BI Service, including collaboration and governance considerations.

**Presenter(s):** Santhana Lakshmi Ponnurasan; Andrew Sommer; Brianna Reddick;

Supervisor's Toolkit: Practical Leadership Techniques for IR Success (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

*Pre-Conference Sessions | Mint Room (ML4)*

Supervisors in Institutional Research (IR) are often promoted for technical expertise but receive little formal training in leading people. This interactive workshop provides a Supervisor's Toolkit of practical, easy-to-apply techniques—covering delegation, feedback, recognition, and team alignment—tailored to the realities of IR offices. Rather than theory, the session emphasizes hands-on practice: participants will role play common IR situations such as vague requests, missed deadlines, or competing project priorities, and apply structured techniques to resolve them. Through realistic scenarios and action planning, attendees will gain immediately usable strategies to strengthen clarity, build trust, and enhance the effectiveness of IR teams on their campuses.

**Presenter(s):** G. Marc Turner; Sarah Gallimore;

Telling Your Economic Impact Story with Data (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

*Pre-Conference Sessions | Tulip Room (Mezzanine)*

As higher education faces pressure to demonstrate its value, institutions must proactively tell their own stories with data. This workshop equips institutional research professionals to use data they already collect to estimate and communicate their institution's economic impact. Drawing on practical experience and a real-world case study, participants will learn accessible methods to quantify contributions to local employment, wages, and community vitality. The session emphasizes turning analysis into compelling narratives for legislators, donors, community stakeholders, and internal leadership. With more than half of institutions either lacking an economic impact study or unsure if one was conducted, IR professionals are uniquely positioned to fill this gap. Participants will leave with tools, templates, and a flexible framework to build or enhance their own economic impact story, aligning evidence with strategic messaging to strengthen advocacy, advancement, and planning.

**Presenter(s):** John Ingram; Cathleen Kisak;

Using Artificial Intelligence for Curriculum and Outcomes Assessment (ADDITIONAL FEE/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

*Pre-Conference Sessions | Treasury Room (ML4)*

Our interactive workshop will explore the transformative potential and endless opportunities with artificial intelligence (AI) in curriculum mapping and outcomes assessment within higher education and professional training programs. This workshop will help advance faculty and administrators' application

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of AI in all arenas of curriculum teaching and advancement. Participants will learn how to use readily available AI tools such as Microsoft CoPilot to streamline data collection, enhance analysis of learning outcomes, and support continuous improvement efforts within the safe, familiar, and University level, Microsoft 365 suite environment.

**Presenter(s):** Rahul Garg; Lawrence LeClaire;

### Conference Begins

12:15 PM - 12:45 PM

#### First Time at Forum

*Panel Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Leadership & Career Development*

First Time at Forum is a special orientation session designed to help new attendees make the most of their AIR Forum experience. Participants will receive an overview of AIR Forum highlights, tips for navigating sessions and events, and practical guidance on how to connect with colleagues across the AIR community. Whether you're attending AIR Forum for the first time or simply want a refresher, this session offers a supportive space to ask questions, build confidence, and start Forum feeling informed and connected.

**Presenter(s):** Jennifer Chu; Brent Drake; Christine Keller;

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

#### Accreditation in Transition: Quality, Trust, and the Policy Landscape

*Impact Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Research & Policy*

Accreditation is entering a period of significant change shaped by shifting federal policy, rising public scrutiny, and renewed attention to institutional outcomes and accountability. In this session, Dr. Nasser Paydar, President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), will explore the current higher education landscape and the vital role of quality assurance and accreditation in connecting institutional mission, performance, and public trust.

He will also examine the evolving federal policy and accreditation environment, including what recent developments may mean for colleges and universities, accreditors, and institutional leaders. This session will provide timely perspective on the issues likely to shape accreditation expectations and institutional readiness in the years ahead.

**Presenter(s):** Nasser Paydar; Adrea Hernandez;

#### Building a Trusted Federal State Longitudinal Data Network

*Impact Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4) | Research & Policy*

Calls for stronger federal data capacity have accelerated with the College Transparency Act and ongoing challenges to NCES surveys and IPEDS. This session explores the vision for a federal Student Longitudinal Data Network (SLDN) that connects state systems, institutions, and workforce data to provide comprehensive insights into student pathways. Drawing on comparative lessons from 14 states, the

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session highlights best practices in governance, privacy-by-design, and tiered access. Presenters will show how aligning SLDN submissions with IPEDS definitions, templates, and edit checks can build trust and reduce burden for institutions. Discussion will emphasize practical steps—what institutions, associations, and researchers should know now, and how the SLDN could reshape data use for accountability, equity, and advocacy.

**Presenter(s):** Carolyn Mata; Aida Ali Akreyi; James Isaac;

The Future of Work and the Changing Role of Postsecondary Education  
*Impact Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3)*

Postsecondary education is facing increasing scrutiny as the public asks, “Is college worth it?” This session begins with a clear “yes,” and then looks ahead to the future of work and the challenges on the horizon. It will explore how institutions can develop strategies that remain flexible in the face of change and how educational delivery can be more closely aligned with evolving workforce needs.

**Presenter(s):** Brent M. Drake; Jeff Strohl;

What to Watch: Federal Higher Education Policy and What’s Next  
*Impact Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Research & Policy*

Federal higher education policy continues to shift quickly, shaped by changing priorities, legal challenges, federal data requirements, and developments at the U.S. Department of Education. This session brings together leading policy experts to provide a timely overview of what is happening now and where federal policy may be headed next.

Panelists will discuss emerging priorities, likely areas of federal focus, and the broader implications for institutions and the postsecondary sector. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of the current policy environment and the issues most worth watching in the months ahead.

**Presenter(s):** Christine Keller; Diane Cheng; Bryan Cook; Jonathan Fansmith;

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Empowering Stakeholders with Gen-AI: Delivering Dynamic and Accessible Data  
*Impact Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

This session presents a practical, scalable workflow for transforming static assessment reports into a dynamic, self-service "Intelligent Archive" using Google’s NotebookLM. Participants will learn a three-layered prompting strategy that teaches AI models how to interpret and synthesize a range of data sources - from student surveys to focus group transcripts - into a trusted, interactive resource. Through live demonstrations and institutional use cases, the speaker will show how this workflow enables stakeholders to perform initial data exploration, compare trends, and generate grounded insights in real time. Attendees will leave with a clear, replicable blueprint for building their own intelligent archives and strategies for navigating challenges such as data accessibility, tool limitations, and stakeholder adoption.

**Presenter(s):** Shannon Foster; Madison Speck; Kirby Livingston;

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Federal Earnings Data & Your Institution: What to Know  
*Impact Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3)*

While the federal policy focus on program-level post-college outcomes in the form of earnings began more than a decade ago with gainful employment regulations for a select group of institutions, the concept has since expanded across all institution types through multiple channels. These include Gainful Employment, STATS, the College Scorecard, and voluntary federal efforts such as Postsecondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO). Join us for a conversation about the various earnings outcomes measures that may be relevant to programs on your campus. Participants will gain an understanding of what each effort is, the unique characteristics each embodies, and how each earnings measure may be interpreted and used.

**Presenter(s):** Christopher M. Mullin; Jennifer Engle; Andrew Foote; Clare McCann; Amy O'Hara; Alexandra Radford

The Missing Link: Integrating Finance Data for Strategic Institutional Resilience  
*Impact Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4)*

Higher Ed Data and Higher Ed Finance often operate as parallel lines that rarely intersect. However, institutional leaders can no longer make student-centered decisions without understanding the fiscal impact, nor a budget decision without understanding its impact on the student experience. This panel explores the critical "middle ground" through a facilitated conversation with institutional leaders who have successfully bridged the "data silo" between the Provost's office and the CFO. Panelists will discuss how integrating financial data and metrics into broader institutional data structures has transformed their decision-making. Attendees will learn how to advocate for better finance data access, the technical challenges of reconciling often disparate ERP and SIS datasets, and strategies for translating complex financial realities into actionable insights for academic stakeholders. In an era of increasing fiscal scrutiny and "demographic cliffs," this session provides a roadmap for IR/IE professionals to position themselves as indispensable strategic partners.

**Presenter(s):** Michael Daly; Mary Ann Coughlin; Jeremy Goodman; Braden Hosch;

What to Watch: Federal Higher Education Policy and What's Next (ENCORE)  
*Impact Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Research & Policy*

Federal higher education policy continues to shift quickly, shaped by changing priorities, legal challenges, federal data requirements, and developments at the U.S. Department of Education. This session brings together leading policy experts to provide a timely overview of what is happening now and where federal policy may be headed next. Panelists will discuss emerging priorities, likely areas of federal focus, and the broader implications for institutions and the postsecondary sector. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of the current policy environment and the issues most worth watching in the months ahead.

**Presenter(s):** Christine Keller; Diane Cheng; Bryan Cook; Jonathan Fansmith;

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4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Opening reception in the Networking Hub & Exhibit Hall  
*Exhibit Hall | Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | 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 28, 2026

7:45 AM - 10:00 AM

Opening Keynote  
*Keynote | Liberty & Independence Ballrooms (ML4)*

7:45 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Breakfast buffet and seating  
8:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Program and Opening Keynote speaker

Speaker: Kate O'Neill

Known worldwide as the "Tech Humanist," Kate is a digital innovator, chief executive, business writer, and globally recognized speaker. As founder and CEO of KO Insights, she helps the world's leading organizations enhance human experiences at scale through data-driven and AI-led interactions.

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Accessibility Meets Analytics- Designing Inclusive Power BI Dashboards  
*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

Dashboards are powerful tools for driving data-informed decisions in higher education, but accessibility is too often overlooked. This session shows how to design Power BI dashboards that deliver insights while remaining usable for all audiences. Through real-world higher ed examples, we will share practical strategies to enhance equity, clarity, and storytelling with intentional design. Attendees will learn how small adjustments-like improving color contrast, adding clear navigation, and using alt text-can transform dashboards into inclusive tools that communicate effectively with diverse users. The session features live redesigns of higher education visuals, demonstrating techniques to highlight key metrics while meeting accessibility standards. Participants will also receive a practical checklist to apply in their own work. By the end, attendees will be prepared to design dashboards that engage stakeholders and support inclusive, actionable decision-making at their institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Santhana Lakshmi Ponnurasan;

Affiliated Organization (AO) Roundtable  
*Roundtable | Gallaudet Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

This Roundtable is a closed, peer-to-peer discussion for leaders of AIR Affiliated Organizations. This session provides a confidential space for Affiliated Organization leaders to ask questions, exchange ideas,

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and share insights related to governance, programming, membership, and operational challenges. Designed specifically for leadership, the roundtable encourages candid conversation, collective problem-solving, and connection across the AIR affiliate community.

**Presenter(s):** Jennifer Chu;

America's Trusted Talent System: Integrated Federal Ed and Workforce Data  
*Sponsor Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

Decade after decade there have been calls for an integrated federal education and training data system that informs employers, learners and leaders of America's vast human capital. Yet, to date, efforts to create such a system halted at visionary ideas. We build upon the wisdom gleaned from decades of recommendations to articulate a clear plan, finally moving the Nation from aspiration to action. Join us for an engaging dialogue that meets various federal agencies and programs where they are as a starting point for moving them forward. Join a conversation to inform the vision, comment on its impact and shape its future. The purpose of this session is to share a vision and an action plan for how federal reporting may be streamlined and aligned. Participants will learn about the various contextual factors that go into developing a federal education to work data action plan.

**Presenter(s):** Christopher M. Mullin;

Benchmarking for Impact: Using PDP Data to Drive Continuous Improvement  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Benchmarking is a powerful yet often underused driver of institutional improvement. The Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) offers a standardized, equity centered framework that helps institutions understand student progress, identify performance gaps, and make evidence based decisions. This session introduces a six step benchmarking cycle and illustrates how key metrics – such as Credit Accumulation Rate, Credit Completion Ratio, persistence, outcomes, and transfer – can reveal equity gaps and inform student success strategies. Participants will learn how to select meaningful peer institutions, avoid common pitfalls (including choosing peers based on prestige rather than mission alignment), and use comparative data to strengthen institutional strategy. Attendees will leave with practical guidance for setting aligned benchmarking objectives, leveraging PDP dashboards for analysis, and building an actionable continuous improvement process that turns data into direction.

**Presenter(s):** Qua'Aisa Williams; Blake Nantz;

Beyond Ratios: Benchmarking Administrative Staffing in Higher Education  
*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This study investigates drivers of noninstructional staffing at American Association of Universities (AAU) institutions amid growing concerns about administrative expenditures and efficiency (Briody et al., 2021; McClure & Titus, 2018). Guided by Bowen's Revenue Theory of Costs (Bowen, 1980), Neo-Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and Organizational Contingency Theory (Donaldson, 2001), elastic net regression explained 97% of staffing variation and revealed distinct public-private patterns. Findings identified institutions over- or understaffed relative to predicted benchmarks.

**Presenter(s):** Mahmut Gundogdu;

Boosting Analytics Capacity with Shared Services: A Collaborative Approach  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 4 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

In today's higher education environment, budget cuts, hiring freezes, and reductions in force (RIFs) are increasingly common. Many institutional research offices are facing the challenge of maintaining analytic capacity and timely reporting while doing more with less. This session explores an innovative approach used by presenters at Duke University and the University of New Mexico to sustain institutional analytics capacity through shared service agreements and collaborative resource pooling across campus units. Participants will learn how to identify complementary skills across departments, negotiate shared service agreements, and implement a framework that maintains high-quality data services while reducing individual unit burdens. Through case examples and lessons learned, this session will provide actionable insights for maintaining or expanding capacity, even in the face of staffing reductions and constrained budgets.

**Presenter(s):** Charla Orozco; Heather Mechler;

Building Effective Machine Learning Pipelines for Student Retention  
*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

Student retention remains one of the most pressing challenges in higher education, and predictive analytics can provide institutions with the insights needed to take timely, impactful action. This session will share key lessons learned in building machine learning pipelines to identify at-risk students. Topics include: designing sustainable pipelines, applying dynamic feature selection, choosing and evaluating models, addressing class imbalance, interpreting results through probability ranking and performance metrics. We will also cover the role of automation and experiment tracking in improving efficiency and reproducibility. Rather than a step-by-step technical build, the session focuses on practical strategies, considerations, and pitfalls to avoid. Attendees will have a clear sense of what matters most when developing ML approaches for student success analytics.

**Presenter(s):** Nicholas Leonhard; Wayne Jones;

Business Intelligence Files: A Detective's Case on Warehousing & Governance  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

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Join us in the Business Intelligence Files as we follow a detective's trail into data warehousing and governance. This session investigates how to design dimensional models, build automated ETL pipelines, and optimize Snowflake structures while ensuring trust through metadata, lineage, and clear definitions in OpenMetadata. Using a detective narrative, we examine the systems and tools that protect, provision, and transform data into trusted intelligence for decision support. Attendees will gain practical strategies for modeling, automation, and governance integration that strengthen both technical foundations and institutional confidence. Step into the role of a data detective and uncover methods to solve your institution's data mysteries with clarity, efficiency, and integrity.

**Presenter(s):** Melissa Haney;

Course Evaluation: Out with the Old, In with Engaged Response and Feedback  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Course evaluation surveys (CES) face criticism over bias, methods, and use in faculty review, while declining response rates limit their value. In 2024, National University replaced its 17-item CES with a four-question, NPS-inspired pulse survey that tripled responses. This session demonstrates how institutional research can align CES with leadership priorities, including accountability, responsiveness, and student engagement, while fostering a culture shift. Faculty gain actionable data, deans see clearer trends, and students witness feedback driving change. Participants will leave with strategies to position CES as catalysts for dialogue and improvement at scale.

**Presenter(s):** Angela Baldasare; Heidi Burnett; Kim Round;

Different Strokes: Serving Academic Units From a Centralized Data Shop  
*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Centralized data or IR offices often serve a wide range of academic units, each with its own expectations, timelines, and level of data fluency. How can one office meet them all effectively? In this session, we share our methods of service to best meet the needs of different colleges across campus. Through stakeholder engagement, request tracking, and "service tiering", we created a structure that's both consistent and responsive. Attendees will leave with a practical framework, example communication strategies, and tools to balance customization with efficiency in their own institutional contexts.

**Presenter(s):** Jessica Schmidt;

Exploring the Role of AI in Coding and Analyzing Qualitative Feedback  
*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

Higher education institutions rely on open-ended survey responses to capture the student voice. Institutional researchers are tasked with coding these responses for reporting, while also identifying disclosures that may require Title IX or other follow-up. Generative AI offers powerful new tools to accelerate qualitative coding and flag sensitive content, but its use also introduces questions of accuracy, ethics, and transparency. Institutions strive to balance efficiency with the obligation while informing respondents when AI assists in reviewing their comments. This discussion group will provide a forum to share practices, challenges, and strategies for responsibly integrating AI into qualitative analysis.

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**Presenter(s):** Angela Ward;

From Reactive to Proactive: Using the AIR Data Literacy Institute to Build Institutional Data Maturity

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2)*

Findings from the 2024 AIR National Survey underscore the connection between data literacy and effective decision-making. Among institutions that offer data literacy training, 55% of Directors of IR/IE report that employees demonstrate higher levels of data maturity (operating at proactive or optimized levels) when using information for decision making. In contrast, 75% of Directors at institutions without data literacy training report low maturity levels, (reactive or not occurring). So how can institutions build data literacy capacity without spending years developing curriculum? One solution is the AIR Data Literacy Institute (DLI). This 12-week, cohort-based learning experience supports up to 30 participants from diverse institutional roles including faculty, advisors, administrators, and staff. Participants take part in hands-on training and collaborative, team-based research projects grounded in real institutional challenges. Join us to explore the DLI model, learn how it can be implemented at your institution, and discover how structured, collaborative learning can accelerate data literacy and strengthen decision-making across campus.

**Presenter(s):** Darlena Jones; Elaine Cappellino; Jason Lewis;

It's IR not the ER: Shifting from Urgencies to Efficiencies

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Are you regularly confronted with data emergencies? Would you like to shift your time to more significant projects? Learn how three colleges tackled high data demands by creating more systematic and sustainable approaches to addressing stakeholders' needs. Presenters will explain their strategies for efficiently managing ad hoc requests, strengthening stakeholder use of existing IR resources, and being proactive about preparing data to advance college priorities. Participants will be able to apply these strategies for minimizing chaos and maximizing capacity in their institutional research offices. These strategies are important to reinforce the role of institutional researchers as providers of meaningful information, not just as institutional rescuers for data emergencies.

**Presenter(s):** Elisa Hertz; Elisabeth Lackner; Yongchao (Yimi) Zhao;

Predicting Complex Student Movements with Markov Chain Models

*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Markov Chain models have been used to predict the movement of students as they progress from first year to second year and beyond. Yet, students move through their studies in many ways (e.g., changing programs, shifting to part-time, moving to in-state status). This session will demonstrate how Markov Chain models can be enhanced to account for these additional movements and predict more granular counts of returning students. For example, instead of projecting the number of students in the engineering department who will return in following years, the enhanced model can account for students who move in from other departments, producing more accurate unit-level forecasts that can be used to make effective budgetary and programmatic decisions. The presenter will walk participants

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through the basics of a Markov Chain model using accessible terminology and showcase how to build a flexible model that captures the many ways students move through their studies.

**Presenter(s):** Kristina Podesta;

Qualtrics Live Dashboards for Real-Time and Cross-Year Insights  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Institutional researchers are under increasing pressure to provide real-time insights from survey data. This session presents a case study of Bucknell University's shift from static reports to live data visualizations and provides a demonstration on how to transform quantitative and qualitative survey data into live dashboards using Qualtrics. These dashboards enhance data accessibility, timeliness, and user engagement. The presentation will detail the process of creating live and dynamic dashboards that include demographic filters, update in real-time, and allow for cross-year comparisons. This approach not only streamlines data sharing but also supports timely, data-informed decision-making. The session is designed for IR professionals who want to leverage interactive live dashboards to improve institutional effectiveness. Attendees will gain knowledge and practical strategies on designing interactive dashboards in Qualtrics.

**Presenter(s):** Wei You;

Smarter Surveys with AI: Building a Dynamic Prospective Student Survey  
*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

This session showcases the design and implementation of a prospective student survey for the University of Alabama System, leveraging AI-driven tools to enhance functionality and visual appeal. The survey features dynamic autocomplete questions that allow respondents to select their preferred institutions while capturing additional embedded data elements for each choice. Custom AI-assisted JavaScript enables tailored branching, and AI-generated HTML adds interactive hover features for visual engagement. By combining AI, GitHub-hosted datasets, and advanced logic, the survey improves efficiency, data quality, and participant experience, offering actionable insights into student decision-making and a model for IR professionals seeking to modernize surveys.

**Presenter(s):** Iryna Muse;

Strategy, Data, and Analytics in Higher Education  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 3 Room (ML2) | Leadership & Career Development*

This session will explore Yale University's strategic analysis and data governance frameworks, explaining the evolution from a standalone institutional research team into three interconnected teams. This session is relevant for leaders and data professionals seeking to consider the relationship between team structure and business impact. The primary objectives are to describe Yale's tailored data analysis capabilities, discuss the genesis of the Strategic Analysis and University Data Office teams, and demonstrate how a suite of approaches can inform decision-making across the institution.

**Presenter(s):** Chad Losee; Lily Svensen;

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## Student Intelligence Ecosystem

*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

This proposal introduces the Student Intelligence Ecosystem, a practical framework for transforming institutional research (IR) data into actionable strategies that improve student success. By integrating Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) results with academic data, the system produces aggregate insights that highlight where institutions can act strategically.

Insights are delivered through an interactive dashboard - the Student Success Hub - which translates survey perceptions and academic outcomes into patterns and signals. These aggregate findings guide program-level and institutional interventions, contributing to improved retention and graduation rates while maintaining full compliance with student privacy standards.

**Presenter(s):** Abhishek Singh;

Turn Data into Stories that Elevate Accreditation Outcomes

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Accreditation is more than compliance—it is an opportunity to demonstrate institutional impact. This interactive session explores how to transform accreditation data into clear, compelling stories that resonate with site visit teams. Participants will learn how to align quantitative and qualitative evidence with accreditation criteria and move beyond “data dumps” to meaningful narratives. Using the STORY framework (Set the Stage, Tell the Data, Outline the Action, Reveal the Results, Yield the Insight), attendees will practice crafting concise data stories that connect evidence to mission, outcomes, and continuous improvement.

**Presenter(s):** Bethine Ellie;

U.S. News Rankings: Transparency, Trends, and Tomorrow's Trajectory

*Speaker Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This session offers an in-depth look at the latest changes to the U.S. News & World Report rankings methodology, providing institutional researchers with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the new framework. We will unpack the specific adjustments, including revised computations and the introduction of new data points, and discuss how these changes have impacted the 2026 rankings.

Beyond the numbers, this presentation will serve as a direct dialogue with the institutional research community. We invite skeptical and data-driven questions from attendees, and we are prepared to address the rationale behind these methodological changes. Finally, we will provide a glimpse into the future, outlining potential areas of consideration for upcoming rankings and opening a discussion on how U.S. News can continue to evolve to best serve both prospective students and the institutions they are evaluating.

**Presenter(s):** Eric Brooks; Kenneth Hines

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11:15 AM - 11:35 AM

### Building Buy-in for Data Governance Initiatives

*Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Exhibit Hall Expo Theater - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

It is not uncommon to struggle to gain and maintain momentum within an institution for data governance and data catalog initiatives. Lack of engagement in these initiatives can prevent achieving the desired outcomes of improved data literacy, more effective use of reporting tools, more efficient and accurate processing of data requests, and improved policy compliance. In this session, ask the expert about lessons-learned and pragmatic best-practices that will help create critical engagement from leadership, data stewards/experts, business units, data requesters, data consumers, and various IT gatekeepers. Feel free to ask the expert about strategic alignment, making data governance accessible, and methods to create enthusiasm, prioritize effort, and dramatically reduce the time and work required from your staff.

**Presenter(s):** Brian Parish;

11:15 AM - 12:00 PM

### "What Would Happen If We Did This?" Using LLMs to Anticipate Policy Impacts

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 3 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Institutional research often asks: "What would happen if we implemented a new policy?" Traditional causal inference explains past outcomes but cannot anticipate future actions. This study integrates Large Language Models (LLMs) with Agent-Based Modeling (ABM) to enhance predictive policy analysis. Using Taiwan's 2021–2022 reform—expanding student applications from three to six choices—as a case, we simulate nationwide exam and program selection data. By capturing student decision patterns, our AI-driven model compares enrollment outcomes under both policies. Findings show how LLM-ABM integration offers institutional leaders a powerful tool to forecast consequences and improve higher education decision-making.

**Presenter(s):** YUAN CHIH FU;

### ACTS Study Focus Group #1

*Roundtable | Capitol Hill Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

Join this facilitated discussion to share your institution's experience with the Admissions and Consumer Transparency Supplement (ACTS). These conversations are part of a national study examining how ACTS is being implemented and its impact on institutional research and data reporting. Your insights will help inform future improvements to the data collection and strengthen understanding of how ACTS data can be interpreted and used.

**Presenter(s):** Christine Keller; Bryan Cook;

### Adaptive Learning as a Tool for Effective Placement

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

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Especially within the open-enrollment community college environment, we often have far less information about our students than we would like as they enter, yet we still need to effectively prescribe their path into their curriculum. Amidst this challenge, we tackled the problem with several different studies utilizing regression, machine learning, and data analysis to examine the influence of our various placement methods on our student's immediate and long-term outcomes, with use cases for the data tied to revision of cut score policy, new course development, and evaluation of our placement product altogether during an RFP process. We were able to mathematically demonstrate that scores awarded in the adaptive learning platform, despite being a nontraditional alternative to a standard placement test, correlated directly with a student's expected chances to pass their first course with the college.

**Presenter(s):** Tim Kish; Samantha Turley;

AI Readiness Starts with Context: Semantic Layers for Higher Education  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Many institutions focus on AI tools first, but true readiness begins with context. This session explores how semantic layers translate technical data into trusted, business-friendly terms, creating consistent definitions, governance, and accessible insights. Attendees will learn how semantic layers support responsible AI adoption, enhance data trust, and optimize performance across reporting and analytics. Through examples and practical strategies, participants will discover how to design semantic layers that strengthen institutional decision-making, ensure data consistency, and prepare their organizations to leverage AI effectively.

**Presenter(s):** Heather Epstein-Diaz; Eclipse Ramsey;

Building the Base: Contextualizing Faculty Achievement for Decision-Making  
*Sponsor Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

This session examines how faculty lifecycle data (hiring, promotion, tenure) can be combined with contextual research benchmarking to better understand candidate trajectories, disciplinary expectations, and peer comparisons. Drawing on collaboration between faculty affairs and research functions, we will explore real-world applications.

**Presenter(s):** Danielle Certa; Anthony Morris;

Charting Our North Star: IR's Role in Developing ACC's Theory of Change  
*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

In AY2023-24, Austin Community College (ACC) launched a North Star initiative to redefine student success through a collaborative Theory of Change (ToC) integrated into the College's strategic plan. This session explores the critical role of the Office of Institutional Research and Analytics in using internal and external data to build evidence-based pillars for institutional transformation. The presenter will introduce the ToC framework, share ACC's journey of refining these strategies through stakeholder partnership, and discuss lessons learned. Attendees will understand how a North Star goal drives institutional success and how IR offices can act as strategic partners to increase campus-wide data literacy. By the end of this session, participants will be able to recognize the significance of integrating a

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ToC into strategic planning and identify specific methods for facilitating deep data engagement among college employees to support institutional goals.

**Presenter(s):** Susan Burkhauser;

Course Evaluation Completion Over Student Careers and Policy Impacts

*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

Student course evaluations play a central role in demonstrating instructional quality and informing high-stakes decisions such as tenure, promotion, and merit. However, low and uneven response rates raise serious concerns about validity and fairness of the results. This session highlights how one campus improved completion rates from 32% in Fall 2022 to 77% in Spring 2024, through a coordinated set of strategies, including LMS/portal nudges, suppression-aware reminders, temporary Canvas content blocking, and centralized administration. We will also demonstrate how the IR office can assess the impact of such policies using accessible statistical approaches, including regression discontinuity designs and hierarchical logistic regression with lagged terms to capture habit formation. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to boost participation, strengthen the representativeness of evaluation results, and apply practical analytic methods that can be adapted to their own campuses.

**Presenter(s):** John (Skip) Crooker; Shellie Brattain; Qingmin Shi;

Falling Behind, Catching Up: Data Insights on Delayed Graduation

*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Students who enter a university as First-Time-in-College (FTIC) students typically anticipate graduating within four years. Yet, some require an additional Fall term to complete their degree requirements. This exploratory study examines factors that distinguish students who graduate on time from those who extend into a fifth Fall term. Findings indicate that students needing an extra term not only fall behind in planning but also encounter greater challenges in successfully earning attempted credits. By highlighting patterns in academic performance and planning, this study provides a foundation for future research to identify critical tipping points when students begin to fall off track, offering insights for targeted interventions that promote timely graduation.

**Presenter(s):** Chiung-Ya Tang; David Stanford;

From Vision to Action: Strategic Alignment Through the Vision Matrix

*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Institutions frequently articulate bold visions but often struggle to operationalize them. This session introduces the Vision Matrix, the strategic framework leaders at Salt Lake Community College developed to translate aspirational goals into actionable, measurable outcomes. Presenters will demonstrate how the Vision Matrix was developed and implemented to align planning, budgeting, and assessment, while engaging stakeholders across the institution. Participants will gain both a clear understanding of the Vision Matrix model and practical guidance for adapting it to their own organizational context.

**Presenter(s):** Leonel Nieto;

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## Igniting Curiosity through a Data Summit

*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Curiosity is the spark that ignites data engagement. At Tarrant County College, the Office of Institutional Research launched the Data and Research Summit, an annual event designed to inspire faculty and staff to explore data beyond compliance and reporting. This session shares how we leveraged storytelling, visual dashboards, and strategic partnerships to cultivate a data-curious community. Attendees will learn how curiosity-driven design led to the creation of the IR Data Hub and IR Corner, which laid the foundation for the Summit and transformed data access and engagement across the college. Along the way, we'll share key lessons learned from our journey, what worked, what didn't, and what we'd do differently. Join us to explore practical strategies for hosting your own summit and fostering a culture where curiosity leads to data-informed action.

**Presenter(s):** Holly Stovall; Abbie Arellano; Christina Kraines;

## Insights for Timely Action: Leading Indicators for Students Success

*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Most institutions have methods to identify students at risk of non-completion by looking at contextual factors and on student success indicators such as credit completion, retention, and graduation, but too often the indicators used to determine success and drive action are lagging behind student's experience and behavior. This session will provide an overview of a project to research, define, automate, and visualize leading indicators of student success. Leading indicators are defined as enabling timely intervention with students within a week of a defined behavior that has been shown to impact student success outcomes. We will cover research projects completed for high-value indicators, how we collaborated with student affairs, the technical set up for data automation in our data warehouse (Snowflake), visualization in our BI tool (Power BI), and future plans.

**Presenter(s):** Chris Urban; Yuhao Liu; Nicole Hamler;

## Integrating Curricular Analytics and Institutional Metrics for Improvement

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Union Station Room (ML3) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Curricular Analytics is a tool for identifying structural barriers to on-time degree completion. It quantifies prerequisite chains and course dependencies into a digestible "Complexity" score; however, this is insufficient for understanding curriculum-related barriers to progress to degree. UC San Diego IR combined Curricular Analytics metrics with institutional metrics including waitlist counts, DFW rates, equity gaps, and frequency of course offering to create a new metric, "Impact Index", which allows courses to be ranked by the impact they have on students' progress to degree. Additionally, the methodology quantifies the average number of students who are affected by any one course, humanizing the data. Combining hypothetical metrics like complexity with real metrics allows for targeted change at the course level to improve throughput in the degree plan.

**Presenter(s):** Erin Espaldon;

## Quantifying the Impact of Educational Initiatives: A Framework

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 4 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

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As universities invest in new educational innovations, the need for a scalable and reliable method of evaluation becomes critical. This presentation will outline a practical framework for measuring the effectiveness of teaching and learning initiatives. We will discuss key considerations for defining objectives and selecting appropriate metrics that accurately reflect the initiative's goals. The framework will be demonstrated through a real-world case study of a first-year program designed to help students explore colleges and majors. Attendees will gain a better understanding of how to design an evaluation protocol that can be adapted across different programs and initiatives, ensuring that a university's investment in innovation is both strategic and data-informed.

**Presenter(s):** Kimberly Williamson;

Surveys as Homework? Integrating IR Surveys into Course Assignments

*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Emory University's first-year survey series, embedded in ECS 101, provides actionable insights that enhance student success and retention. Developed through collaboration among the Office of Undergraduate Education, Campus Life, and Institutional Research & Decision Support, the series captures student experiences at critical points and generates "flags" that prompt timely advisor outreach. By linking survey results with enrollment data, Emory evaluates outcomes, refines strategies, and ensures that interventions are both responsive and impactful. This session will share survey design, collaborative practices, and results, offering participants a scalable framework for building data-informed student support initiatives.

**Presenter(s):** Smriti Ingrole;

What's in a Grade? Connecting GPA, Student Success, and the Labor Market

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

This session reframes GPA as an assessment question: what evidence of learning and development does it truly represent? By linking academic, engagement, and labor market data, participants will explore how GPA functions as one indicator within a broader assessment ecosystem. The session illustrates how grade and indirect (engagement and belonging measured through NSSE) measures can be integrated to assess both learning outcomes and life outcomes. Through data storytelling and visualization, participants will consider how to use assessment findings to communicate impact and inform improvement efforts across academic and co-curricular domains. Participants will be asked to reflect on their own institutional data practices and personal experiences with grades and learning.

**Presenter(s):** Ryan Smith;

Where did they go? Finding leaks in the nursing education pipeline

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Each year, thousands of freshmen enter college aspiring to become registered nurses (RNs), yet only a fraction ultimately earn a nursing degree. This session presents research conducted by the University System of Georgia (USG) to investigate the academic trajectories of students who initially declare an interest in nursing but do not graduate in the field. Where do they go? Which courses most significantly

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influence students' progression and admission into nursing programs? What are the academic outcomes for students who are denied entry into nursing programs? Using a longitudinal dataset, researchers identified key courses that influence progression into nursing programs and examined outcomes for students denied admission. Presenters will share their findings, discuss innovative data collection and analysis methods, and offer insights into improving data systems to support more effective evaluation and student success strategies.

**Presenter(s):** David Tanner; Charles Sanchez; Angela Bell;

Writing for Publication: Advice from Writers and Editors

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Research & Policy*

This session is for individuals interested in learning about writing for scholarly publication. A panel of editors and authors will share insights, advice, and suggestions. Topics include getting started with writing for publication, building a publication portfolio, tips for navigating the publication and peer review processes, and the role of AI in this work. The focus of this session is on tangible advice for aspiring authors, including ways to gain experience. Join us to discover how you can contribute to the body of literature and impact the field.

**Presenter(s):** Leah Ross; Iryna Muse; Osundwa Wanjera; Mary Ann Coughlin;

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM

Institutional Data Architecture: People, Structures, and Strategy

*Panel Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Leadership & Career Development*

We all recognize that data is an integral component of decision-making, and too often “data” is highly prized but underprioritized. This proposal suggests broadening the term from “data architecture” to “institutional data architecture” to capture the operational design of how campuses structure their data domains, systems, governance bodies, and processes while simultaneously defining how people, workflows, and technology interact to manage data as an institutional asset.

Through a professional development and leadership lens, this session aims to encourage data leaders to think more broadly about their institutional data context, fostering dialogue around best practices, challenges, and future directions. Whether you are in IR, IT, assessment, or student success analytics, this conversation will help you reflect on your own data environment and consider new possibilities for collaboration and innovation.

**Presenter(s):** Jason Wang; Ivana Fredotovic; Melissa Baker; Paige Borden;

Rethinking Switzerland: Bringing Your Holistic Identity to Work

*Panel Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

For decades, the ideal state of the field of IR has been described as “Switzerland”—a neutral party existing only to provide neutral data. While fairness, rigor, and ethical integrity remain essential, this framing is increasingly outdated. IR professionals cannot—and should not—leave behind their lived

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identities when engaging with data. By embracing our authentic perspectives through identity-aware practices, we can move from being passive observers to active contributors who advocate for institutional change and improvement. This session invites data professionals to rethink neutrality, explore the risks and rewards of bringing one's whole self to work, and consider strategies for leading with integrity and authenticity.

**Presenter(s):** Jeremy Goodman; Marco Antonio Cruz; Kavya Sree Mariboyina;

*The IR/IE Influencer: Guiding Leadership by Leveraging Benchmarking Tools*  
*Panel Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4) | Decision Support*

Demands on staff in offices of institutional research (IR) and institutional effectiveness (IE) have grown exponentially and become unpredictable. This pressure can drive IR/IE to fulfill requests for data and leave little time and energy for the critical work of meaning making and interpretation for decision makers on campus. This session provides strategies for IR/IE professionals to use benchmarking reports to evolve from report generators to advisors. Using their experiences on campus, panelists from two very different institutions will share how they use benchmarking reports to help institutional leaders make informed, strategic decisions. Using a fictional case study with the Council of Independent Colleges' benchmarking reports, participants will gain ideas for shifting from data providers to information interpreters, ultimately improving institutional decision-making.

**Presenter(s):** Ellen Peters; Kristina Church; Karen Froslid-Jones; Seth Houston;

*The Ripple Effect: How Small Actions Foster Strong Leadership*  
*Panel Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Leadership & Career Development*

This session explores the profound impact of intentional, day-to-day behaviors on leadership development. Moving beyond strategic and operational leadership skills that we shared at AIR Forum in Orlando last year, we will focus on the "small things" that build trust, inspire teams, and create lasting influence. Our panel will share personal stories, demonstrating how simple acts such as of follow-through, active listening, being punctual, clear in communication, and empathy accumulate the "secret sauces" to build and define a leader's character and capability.

**Presenter(s):** Henry Zheng; Yesenia Espinal; Adrea Hernandez; Hui Xiong;

11:40 AM - 12:00 PM

*Explorance BlueX: The Survey Software That's Built for Everyone*  
*Sponsor Product Demonstration | Exhibit Hall Expo Theater - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

In today's dynamic higher education environment, feedback isn't just a formality — it's a foundation for improvement. Whether you're collecting insights from students, faculty, or staff, you need a survey platform that's built for the unique pace, structure, and governance of academic institutions. Join this session for an exclusive look at a new survey platform redefining how higher education collects and acts on insights. Built to go beyond traditional form builders, Explorance BlueX enables academic teams to create expressive, intuitive, and actionable surveys with ease. From research projects to administrative surveys, BlueX delivers unmatched customization, seamless collaboration, and advanced analytics—so

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every voice can be heard and every decision can be data-informed. BlueX enables institutions to do more than surveys, including forms, newsletters, non-graded quizzes, and interactive content with a single intuitive survey editor.

**Presenter(s):** Umar Mushtaq;

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Lunch break and poster presentations in the Networking Hub & Exhibit Hall (food for purchase)  
*Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Lunch Break*

Grab-and-go options for purchase will be in the Exhibit Hall on Wednesday, May 27, and Thursday, May 28. Be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there!

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

Comparing StepAIC and LASSO Regression Models to Predict Student Retention  
*Poster Presentation | Poster 29 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Decision Support*

Student retention is a vital measure of institutional performance and student success, especially in community colleges serving diverse and non-traditional populations. This study examined data on 7,419 students enrolled at Kaskaskia College between 2020 and 2025 to evaluate fall-to-fall retention using demographic, academic, and financial predictors. Two modeling approaches were compared: stepwise logistic regression with Akaike Information Criterion (StepAIC) and penalized logistic regression using LASSO. Both achieved similar predictive performance (accuracy 68.4%; AUC ~0.74). StepAIC yielded interpretable factor-level coefficients, while LASSO retained more predictors with smaller coefficients. A DeLong test showed no significant difference between models. Together, these methods offer complementary insights to inform interventions, early-alert systems, and predictive dashboards that enhance student persistence and institutional effectiveness.

**Presenter(s):** James Anderson;

Early Momentum and Student Success Factors at a Community College  
*Poster Presentation | Poster 25 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

This session explores how early academic milestones such as credit accumulation and completion of gateway courses predict long-term success for community college students in Colorado. Using data from 2,265 first-time students, the research highlights how enrollment status, gender, and financial aid relate to academic outcomes. Attendees will learn how gateway courses, credit accumulation, and support services like advising and tutoring influence retention, graduation, and GPA. The session also examines equity gaps across race, gender, and program type, offering practical strategies to improve student outcomes. By focusing on both academic and support service factors, this session provides insights that can help institutions design effective interventions to support persistence and close achievement gaps. It is ideal for educators, institutional researchers, administrators, and policymakers committed to advancing student success and equity in higher education.

**Presenter(s):** Hyekyung Lee; Cuirong Wu; Kushmakar Baral;

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### Exploring the Direct Admissions Pipeline in Georgia

*Poster Presentation | Poster 27 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

Within the past ten years, over twelve states have launched direct admissions programs to increase college access and participation for high school graduates. This session will explore participation in Georgia's new direct admissions program, GEORGIA MATCH. The University System of Georgia's (USG) Division of Research and Policy Analysis (RPA) supported the program through new data collections, reporting, and analysis, and this poster will highlight the data collected to evaluate the effectiveness of direct admissions in Georgia. This poster will demonstrate the technical, analytic, and creative work required to understand how participation in GEORGIA MATCH relates to applications and enrollment within the USG. This poster will illustrate the benefits of tracking students over time, including links to increasing college attendance and awareness for rural, low-income, and first-generation students.

**Presenter(s):** Leslie Hodges; Lori Prince Hagood;

### From Training to Culture: Building A Sustainable Data Literacy Program

*Poster Presentation | Poster 15 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Weber State University built a structured data literacy program using role-based tracks and micro-credentials to enhance staff and faculty capacity for data-informed decision-making. The program moves beyond one-off training to a sustainable cultural movement by linking learning to the student lifecycle (enrollment, retention, graduation) and core business processes. This poster showcases the curriculum's four-part structure (Intro, Core, Role-Based, Special Training) and the use of the Data Explorer, Navigator, Citizen, and Champion badges to certify progress and apply data insights across various roles (advisors, department chairs, leaders) for improved student outcomes. Attendees will gain practical models to adapt a similar structured, results-oriented training program at their institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Daniel Jensen;

### Measuring Unit Workplace Climate for Faculty, Staff, and Ph.D. Students

*Poster Presentation | Poster 3 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

At higher education institutions, faculty, staff, and graduate students contribute to and uniquely experience the workplace climate of their units. Our department climate assessments involve a survey of each of these groups to measure their perceptions of climate and to better understand how each group experiences climate as well as what changes should be implemented by leadership to support a positive workplace climate for all. To assess workplace climate, we use a set of fifteen Key Experience Indicators (KEIs) that measure sense of belonging, supervisor support, and psychological safety, which are expanded upon later in the survey. The purpose of this poster is to present our survey items as a concise method for measuring overall workplace climate across distinct groups, as well as sharing average results documenting perceptions from faculty, staff, and graduate students from 2023 to 2025.

**Presenter(s):** Mary Bautista; Jordan Hudgins;

### More Than Degrees: Alumni Insights on Student Well-Being in Japan

*Poster Presentation | Poster 23 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

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What does student success look like beyond degrees? This session examines student well-being in Japan in a global context and its link to higher education learning outcomes. Using Waseda University's Alumni Survey (10 Years Post-Graduation) data (n≈1,150), the presentation highlights challenges and practices to strengthen Institutional Research (IR). The poster provides a 12-item well-being instrument for IR, shows how to embed it in an alumni survey, and reports item means; degree- and cluster-based comparisons (Social Sciences, Humanities, Science & Engineering, Education); correlates—engagement, GPA, Diploma Policy (DP) attainment, income, firm size, tenure, Tokyo-metro residence, first-generation; and a multiple regression using an overall 12-item composite as the outcome. By integrating well-being and outcomes assessment, institutions can advance evidence-based decision-making and student support while contributing to the success of higher education in a global context.

**Presenter(s):** Hirokuni Yamada; Tomoko Torii;

#### Navigating and Resolving Discrepancies in IPEDS Reporting Over Time

*Poster Presentation | Poster 5- Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

This paper provides new quantitative insights by combining IPEDS data with a novel payroll database constructed from state sunshine law requests. We adapt the Delta Cost Project methodology to analyze IPEDS expense data from 1984 onward, showing a modest rise in administrative expenses, representing less than 3 percentage points of total spending. These measures are limited by methodological inconsistencies and institutional discretion in reporting. Thus, we analyze payroll data from approximately 140 institutions across 4 states (CA, MI, VA, and TX), encompassing over 13 million employee-years and nearly 130,000 unique job titles. Our payroll-based measures reveal a substantially larger growth in administrative spending: approximately 8 percentage points of payroll expenditures, compared to IPEDS' measures of total spending. These findings highlight how more transparent and consistent data can better inform public policy on administrative costs in higher education.

**Presenter(s):** Andrea Honeycutt;

#### Noncognitive Constructs: Measuring Abilities and Supporting Student Success

*Poster Presentation | Poster 7- Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Research suggests that traditional admissions tests, which focus on cognitive factors (e.g., the SAT or ACT), have not achieved the goal of accurately predicting college success, particularly for underrepresented and low-income students. Researchers at the Center for Predictive Analytics at Morgan State University have developed the Measuring Abilities Supporting Student Success (MAS3)<sup>™</sup> to measure noncognitive constructs predictive of student success outcomes (e.g., retention), addressing this gap. This session will share preliminary findings from the 2023–2024 pilot and explore ways to integrate the instrument into retention strategies, institutional support structures, and broader applications in admissions, first-year programs, and career readiness. The MAS3<sup>™</sup> holds promise to impact educational opportunity for Black, Hispanic, and low-income students, particularly at HBCUs.

**Presenter(s):** Avis Jackson; Erin Murphy; Taj Rollins;

#### Not Just Another Climate Survey (2026 AIR Best Paper)

*Poster Presentation | Poster 21 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

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This presentation features the 2026 AIR Charles F. Elton Best Paper.

Climate surveys are commonly used to capture a snapshot of the experiences of students, faculty, and staff. Although these surveys can provide valuable diagnostic information, the results are not always seen as valuable or acted upon by higher education leaders. In this practice brief, we offer a framework and set of recommendations for survey administrators responsible for helping unit leaders turn survey results into actionable steps. Informed by Quantitative Critical Theory tenets and organizational and experiential learning theories, faculty developers at a medical school coached faculty and department chairs through an experiential survey administration process. This approach accelerated strategic improvement initiatives and laid the foundation for continuous improvement within academic units.

**Presenter(s):** Amy Ribera;

[Optimizing Financial Aid based on Expected Family Income and Major](#)

*Poster Presentation | Poster 13 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

What it covers: This poster presents a decision framework to estimate how institutional aid (as % of COA) affects both the probability of enrollment and expected tuition contribution, segmented by Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and program. Using a calibrated logistic modeling approach, we generate precise “what-if” probabilities for specified aid changes (e.g.,  $\pm 5/10/15$  pp) and translate them into clear, leadership-ready visualizations.

**Presenter(s):** Qingyang Liu;

[Overcoming Technical Challenges and Developing Value from Canvas Data](#)

*Poster Presentation | Poster 1 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

While student course performance often has a profound impact on key outcomes such as retention or degree completion, accessing and using this data can be technically challenging. At Ivy Tech Community College, we use the Canvas platform as our learning management system. This presentation will cover the basics of how we use Canvas Data 2, including an overview of the entity relationship diagram, which tables and fields we have found particularly useful, and how we have transformed and structured this data to facilitate analysis. We will discuss some of the practical challenges we faced in preparing this data for use. Finally, we will briefly describe some of the ways the college has applied this work to support student success in both operational reporting and predictive analytics.

**Presenter(s):** Tim Kish; Samantha Turley;

[Starting Small with AI: Building Trustworthy KPI Dashboards](#)

*Poster Presentation | Poster 19 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

KPI dashboards often suffer from fragmented systems, inconsistent data, and manual cleanup. These problems limit their value for institutional effectiveness. The poster shows how institutional research offices can start small with artificial intelligence to improve data reliability. Examples include entity resolution to unify records, anomaly detection to flag errors, and natural language processing to organize survey comments. Governance and ethics remain central. Human oversight, bias checks, and transparent documentation act as guardrails for every AI use case. Attendees will leave with strategies to launch

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small pilots that deliver cleaner datasets, faster dashboards, and greater confidence among leadership. The objective is simple. AI can be practical, responsible, and immediately useful for lean offices.

**Presenter(s):** Elmer Yglesias;

The impact of financial aid and library resources on student retention.

*Poster Presentation | Poster 9 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Student retention is shaped by the resources and supports available. Financial aid is known to influence student retention and it is important to reevaluate this claim. Furthermore, this poster looks at the comparison to library support and resources for those students. This poster draws on IPEDS data from Research Universities (Carnegie 15, 16, 17) to examine how institutional spending on library resources interacts with financial aid for first-year retention. This will look at whether investments in support services is useful for institutions that give out a lot of financial aid. The poster presents patterns and the combined effect of library investment and financial aid. The results indicate a statistically significant negative correlation between average financial aid given and student retention. Together, these findings redefine the importance of libraries and academic support in student retention.

**Presenter(s):** Ben Liu;

Using AI to Discover Themes in a PhD Graduate Exit Survey

*Poster Presentation | Poster 11 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Student surveys offer rich opportunities to analyze open-ended responses for patterns, trends, and insights that may be overlooked in quantitative analyses of structured questions. However, manually coding these responses to identify themes can be time-consuming and labor-intensive. Recent advances in AI—particularly chatbot technologies—enable researchers to efficiently process and analyze thousands of open-ended responses. This poster presentation will demonstrate how to craft effective prompts for various AI chatbots to uncover thematic patterns in responses from a PhD Graduate Exit Survey.

**Presenter(s):** Melinda Whitford;

1:30 PM - 1:50 PM

Non-economic Value: What we know and still need to know

*Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Exhibit Hall Expo Theater - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

How do we measure the non-economic value of college? This is a question Lumina Foundation has been considering. If you are interested in an overview of the topic, and want to inform future directions, please join us. Our objective is to both acknowledge what is known and develop parameters of what should be.

**Presenter(s):** Christopher M. Mullin;

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1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

### AIR Annual Business Meeting

*Panel Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Hosted by the AIR Board, the association's annual meeting welcomes all Forum attendees. Join us for an update on AIR's priorities, progress, and future direction, followed by the official transition to the 2026–2027 Board of Directors and Nominations & Elections Committee (NEC). Outgoing Board and NEC members will also be recognized for their service and contributions.

**Presenter(s):** Christine Keller; Brent Drake; Bethany Crowell; Shari Ellertson; Adrea Hernandez;

### Impact of College Experience on Student Success, A MultiCollege Perspective

*Panel Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This study explores how college experiences influence student success, measured by first-year GPA and one-year retention, across six universities. Using regression models, the research separates the effects of pre-college preparation and financial aid from the unique contributions of engagement, support services, and campus involvement. Findings will clarify which experiences significantly enhance academic performance and persistence, providing evidence of how institutions directly enhance student success. The study provides a practical framework for colleges to assess their institutional contribution to student outcomes and to design effective interventions. For institutional researchers and higher education practitioners, the study offers both methodological guidance and actionable insights, making it useful for institutions committed to improving student success through data-informed strategies.

**Presenter(s):** Juan Xu; Yuchen (Faye) Ji; Eric Wang; Jing Wang; Yuxiang Liu;

### Institutional Benchmarking and the 2025 Carnegie Classifications

*Panel Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This panel brings together Institutional Research leaders and Carnegie Classification experts to examine the impact of the 2025 update on peer institution selection and benchmarking in higher education. Panelists will explore how the revised classifications influence strategic comparisons, challenge traditional affiliation-based peer selection, and support more equitable and accurate groupings. Through real-world examples and critical discussion, the session will assess gains and limitations of the new framework and consider future improvements to enhance its utility for institutional planning and accountability.

**Presenter(s):** Victor Borden; Paige Borden; Iryna Muse; James Trainer; Mushtaq Gunja;

### What research should IR do and how: A guideline of IR research methodology

*Panel Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Student success is the central mission of higher education, and assessing it requires rigorous, data-driven research. This session presents a practical framework for IR, focusing on what studies to prioritize and how to conduct them with validity and relevance. Four key indicators of success are emphasized: college GPA, student retention, graduation, and post-graduation employment. Using linear regression, logistic

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regression, and survival analysis, the session explores the impact of pre-college factors, financial aid, demographics, and most importantly, college experiences, the institution's value-added contribution to student success. To ensure accessibility, findings will be visualized to clearly illustrate relationships between outcomes and predictors. By offering a systematic and broadly applicable methodology, this session equips institutional researchers with actionable strategies to measure, communicate, and strengthen institutional impact.

**Presenter(s):** Jennifer Wu; Jing Zhao; Hsueh Leung; Yan Li;

1:45 PM - 2:30 PM

A Fellowship Model to Build Campus Data Literacy: Powered by the Presidency

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

This session highlights Louisiana State University's Presidential Data Analytics Fellowship, a year-long initiative that combined presidential sponsorship, centralized data expertise, and mid-level administrators from across campus to build data literacy and strengthen data-informed decision-making. Fellows served as data ambassadors in their units, applying new skills through capstone projects that informed real institutional decisions. Attendees will gain insights into program design, outcomes, survey results, lessons learned, and strategies for adapting this fellowship model to their own institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Adam Elder;

Building an Automated Causal Inference Tool for IR Questions

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

As IR professionals, we often receive questions like whether a specific program can improve students' GPA and if a certain policy may increase matriculation rates. Answering such questions usually requires conducting causal inference analysis. In this session, we will present a web-based tool we have built that can automatically answer all similar questions by simply uploading relevant data onto the tool. We will demonstrate how the tool works with two typical cases in IR. Statistical models behind the tool and IT resources to build such tools will also be introduced. The session will help audience gain better understanding of causal inference in IR and how to build automated tools for a certain type of analysis. Note: this session is NOT about generative AI.

**Presenter(s):** Yuhao Liu;

Collaborative Data Governance: Teamwork Grounded in Practice

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Data governance is often perceived as an overwhelming, all-encompassing campus effort, frequently stalling in committee discussions or losing momentum over time. This session presents a hands-on, collaborative approach to data governance that is rooted in practical data usage, empowers the stakeholders, and aligned with shared organizational goals. Participants will be guided through a structured process for reviewing data elements, understanding data usage, and data standards and policies. The presentation will offer insights into the key questions to ask and the key stakeholders to involve. The approach is designed to align closely with the practices of data users and consumers on campus, so that data governance is relevant and meaningful.

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**Presenter(s):** Elisabeth Lackner;

Data & Reporting Strategies to Drive African American/Black Student Success  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Current race/ethnicity data collection practices often undercount African American/Black and other minoritized students—particularly those who identify with multiple racial or ethnic groups—resulting in gaps in research, planning, and support. This session draws from *You Can't Count If You're Not Counted*, a position paper from The RP Group, to present more inclusive data collection and reporting strategies. Participants will explore federal and state guidelines, implications of current categorization practices, and recommendations for adopting “check all that apply” methods, open-text identity fields, and inclusive reporting frameworks. Attendees will gain tools to interrogate their own institutional practices, learn how more accurate data can improve equity-centered decision-making, and identify strategies to better support historically underserved student populations.

**Presenter(s):** Darla Cooper; P. Marcell Gilmore;

From Submission to Completion: Managing Data Requests with Microsoft 365  
*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Technology & Tools*

Discover how Microsoft 365 can empower your team to automate data request processes and manage them effectively, from the initial submission to final deliverables and completion to post completion management. This session will cover how to design a user-friendly form for submitting data requests, trigger automated workflows using Power Automate, and manage requests through a SharePoint list from initial submission to post completion management. Attendees will learn how to configure automated dynamic email notifications to keep both requesters and assignees informed throughout the process. This session is valuable for professionals seeking to reduce manual effort, improve transparency, and enhance operational efficiency. By the end, participants will understand how to implement a scalable solution that transforms data request handling into a streamlined experience.

**Presenter(s):** Trevor Hart;

How Do I Say No? Discussing Strategies for Saying No to Stakeholders  
*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Given the expansion of the roles and responsibilities of the IR office, many professionals in IR and IE are expected to do more, either with constant or diminishing resources. It can be difficult to draw lines between your office's duties and those of other offices or parties, particularly in an environment where expectations are constantly shifting. In this discussion group, facilitators will kick off the conversation with some of their own experiences balancing these evolving landscapes, setting boundaries around their responsibilities, delegating or working with campus partners to direct stakeholders elsewhere, or giving “no, but...” and “no, however...” answers. Then, we'll turn it over to you to share your experiences, ask for advice on this topic from others in your field, and develop some broad strategies that we can all take back to our campuses.

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

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## Introduction to Using Power Query

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

This introduction to Power Query is for Excel and Power BI users. The session will demonstrate how to efficiently clean, combine, and transform data without altering underlying source files. Participants will learn to navigate the Power Query Editor's GUI interface and create repeatable data workflows. The session features examples using real IR scenarios.

**Presenter(s):** Lynette Duncan;

## Making Higher Ed Data Speak- Storytelling Frameworks That Drive Impact

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

Too often, dashboards and reports focus on displaying numbers without guiding users toward the insights that matter most. In higher education, where data must inform complex decisions, presentation is just as important as analysis. This session introduces practical storytelling frameworks that help transform raw data into actionable visuals. Participants will explore how to structure visuals in ways that guide attention, highlight key findings that might otherwise be overlooked, and design dashboards that lead stakeholders through a logical flow of insights. Using numerous Power BI examples from higher education domain, attendees will leave with a toolkit of storytelling practices that ensure their dashboards do more than present data- they inspire understanding, foster engagement, and support better, evidence-based decision-making across their institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Santhana Lakshmi Ponnurasan; Brianna Reddick; Wayne Jones;

## Paid Internships and Early Career Fit Using National Postsecondary Data

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Career outcomes are a key accountability metric and a frequent question from campus leaders. Using NCES Baccalaureate and Beyond data (B&B 2016/17), we examine whether undergraduate internships, paid or unpaid, are associated with early career fit within 12 months of bachelor's degree completion: (1) employment in a job that requires a degree and (2) employment in a field related to the graduate's degree. We use survey-weighted logistic regression in NCES PowerStats and address its paid/unpaid "no-combine" constraint by estimating four parallel models: paid only, unpaid only, both, and neither. Paid internships show the strongest relationship with early career fit, with the largest benefits for STEM graduates and smaller effects for business graduates. When internships are absent, GPA becomes a stronger signal of early outcomes. Attendees will leave with a replicable PowerStats workflow, practical data visualization ideas, and implications for advising and experiential learning.

**Presenter(s):** Sarah Gallimore; Mary Rosene; Ruyu Yan;

## Prevention Before Payment: NSC Tools Helping IRs Address Aid Fraud

*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Research & Policy*

Financial aid fraud is becoming more advanced, requiring swift, proactive solutions. The National Student Clearinghouse introduces its Suspicious Enrollment Detection Platform, helping institutions spot

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and act on suspicious patterns—like concurrent enrollments, shared addresses, and identity anomalies—before aid is disbursed. The platform offers real-time analytics, automated compliance reports, secure sharing of fraud indicators, and supports coordinated responses. IR offices will learn how to support improper aid disbursement, streamline compliance, and leverage a shared fraud intelligence network, integrating seamlessly with Clearinghouse services; Understand real-time detection to prevent improper aid disbursement; See how automation enhances compliance and reduces workload; Discover benefits of a shared fraud intelligence network for institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Sean McTighe;

[Restructuring for Leadership, Cross-Functional Collaboration, and Capacity](#)  
*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Leadership & Career Development*

Many small liberal arts colleges rely on lean IR/IE teams, even as demands for data-informed decision-making continue to grow. This session outlines how one institution strategically restructured its office, shifting to a more collaborative model without adding positions. The change created clearer role alignment, improved communication, and expanded capacity. The session highlights intentional strategies for staff development, including cross-training, engaging with senior leadership, and fostering professional growth through targeted learning opportunities. It also shares how the team built a collaborative culture through open communication, shared project tools, and weekly partnerships with IT to develop greater technical data infrastructure. Participants will leave with practical strategies for team building, talent development, and structuring IR/IE offices to increase institutional impact in resource-constrained environments.

**Presenter(s):** Tara Webb;

[Socioeconomic influences on graduation rate: Evidence from geospatial data](#)  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 3 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

This study examines the impact of socioeconomic factors on on-time graduation rates using geospatial data analysis. We investigate 23 statistical indices measuring socioeconomic, demographic, healthcare, and crime exposure conditions at the census tract level of students' geographic locations. The research utilizes a dataset of 8,500 students across multiple cohorts from a 4-yr public research university with over 50% of students of color. A mixed-level logistic regression model is employed to distinguish between student-level, academic program, and census tract-level effects on on-time graduation rates. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how contextual factors influence student outcomes. Our findings reveal significant correlations between socioeconomic indicators and graduation rates. Notably, factors such as neighborhood income and education levels, healthcare access, and crime rates yield actionable findings to enhance student recruitment and support.

**Presenter(s):** Serge Herzog;

[StudentTracker and PDP: Solving Your Current and Future Data Needs](#)  
*Sponsor Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

For over 30 years, the National Student Clearinghouse has been your partner in providing learner insights that help you make better and more informed decisions. In this session, we'll discuss how our StudentTracker and Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) services help you measure, improve, and

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communicate student momentum and outcomes today, and in the future as your reporting and analytic needs evolve. We'll also share how you can help shape and inform the future of the Clearinghouse's Learner Insights products and services.

**Presenter(s):** Marty Schmidt; Franc Slapar; Langley Korepanov;

*The Data Leadership Imperative: Data-Driven Decision Making in the Age of AI  
Sponsor Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Colleges and universities are generating more data than ever, but more data doesn't always translate into better decisions. Many institutions still struggle to turn fragmented, inconsistent information into insight that stands—or AI tools—can actually use. Unclear ownership, limited data governance, and a growing reporting burden all delay decisions and make it difficult for leaders outside of IT, IR, and Institutional Effectiveness to make full use of campus data. Intentional data governance can help institutions improve data quality, clarify ownership, prepare for AI adoption, and enable more confident decision-making across campus. In this interactive session, we'll explore how institutions are inspiring stands across the data lifecycle to embrace their role as data leaders. We'll also discuss common barriers to data-informed decision-making and learn key principles for strengthening data governance as a shared leadership practice.

**Presenter(s):** Matt Feger; William Harmon;

*The Node for IR: Lessons from the Field Since Its Development in 2021  
Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

The Node for IR is a weekly e-newsletter highlighting news, reports, and updates for the field of institutional research/effectiveness. Started in March 2020, The Node is emailed every Wednesday and shares up to a dozen key pieces of information from the field of IR/IE. This is a great resource both for new professionals learning about the field and more experienced professionals looking for key pieces of information. We invite you to join us for this sessions where we share what we have learned about the field after 6 years of this e-newsletter. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/nodeforir>.

**Presenter(s):** Eric Godin; Eric Atchison;

2:45 PM - 3:30 PM

*ACTS Study Focus Group #2  
Roundtable | Archives Room (ML4) | Research & Policy*

Join this facilitated discussion to share your institution's experience with the Admissions and Consumer Transparency Supplement (ACTS). These conversations are part of a national study examining how ACTS is being implemented and its impact on institutional research and data reporting. Your insights will help inform future improvements to the data collection and strengthen understanding of how ACTS data can be interpreted and used.

**Presenter(s):** Christine Keller; Bryan Cook

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## AI for IR: Sentiment Analysis of Survey Data

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Institutional researchers often use open-ended survey questions to capture the depth and nuance of the student experience, but analyzing this rich qualitative data at scale presents a significant challenge. This session directly addresses this challenge and compares three sentiment analysis models applied to survey responses: TextBlob (lexicon-based, the default for sentiment analysis in ChatGPT), VADER (rule-based), and RoBERTa (a state-of-the-art transformer-based deep-learning model). Evaluation against human-coded results and using standard machine learning metrics showed that the transformer-based deep learning model -- RoBERTa significantly outperformed the traditional models. This session helps IR professionals make informed choices about adopting AI-assisted methods that balance rigor and feasibility. Attendees will learn how to integrate sentiment analysis into their workflows, combining human coding with automated methods to more efficiently analyze student feedback.

**Presenter(s):** Wei You;

## Aligning Purpose: Beginning Students' Career Plans and College Value

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

Career and life purpose issues weigh heavily in new students' experience and are important to gauge given the current emphasis on demonstrating college value. This session uses matched student data from BCSSE and NSSE to explore the relationship between beginning students' expectations for career and life purpose and their engagement in the first year, including faculty interaction, peer collaboration, perceived gains, and career advising experiences. Results demonstrate the importance of aligning expectations with first year experiences and emphasize facilitating students' early exploration of career and life purpose for higher levels of engagement and success. Importantly, such data can help illuminate the college value context, inform interventions, and guide institutional effectiveness initiatives for student success.

**Presenter(s):** Jillian Kinzie; James Cole;

## Beyond First-Year: Predicting Mid-Progress Dropout at an HBCU

*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

Most dropout prediction focuses on first-year students, yet the highest attrition at an HBCU occurs in the mid-progress window (30–95 credit hours), where students are beyond initial transition supports but still far from graduation. Using 2019–2023 enrollment and financial data, we compared Logistic Regression, Random Forest, Gradient Boosting, XGBoost, CatBoost, and LightGBM with a multi-term dropout definition. F1 scores exceeded 0.80, with CatBoost achieving recall above 90%. SHAP interpretability showed that academic momentum (credit hours and GPA trajectory), loan burden, online enrollment, and age/dependency status drive risk. We translate these predictors into actionable interventions - degree audits, aid counseling, and targeted advising for online and older students, offering a transferable playbook to strengthen mid-progress retention at HBCUs and similar institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Pardha Annareddy; Patrick Harris;

## Chief Data Officer – Institution Research's friend, foe, or natural role?

*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Leadership & Career Development*

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As higher education grapples with the strategic value and ROI of its data, the Chief Data Officer (CDO) role is rapidly emerging as the person responsible for charting the course. But where does this leave Institutional Research (IR)? Is the CDO a collaborative partner, a new reporting line, or a potential competitor? This session dives into the evolving data landscape, analyzing the potential symbioses and tensions between traditional IR functions and the burgeoning CDO role. Join us to explore why the CDO position represents a vital C-suite progression for both experienced IR and IT leaders.

**Presenter(s):** Michael Le;

*Data Governance Journeys, from Chaos to Control- Lessons Along the Way  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 3 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

The process of data governance at each institution travels along a continuum. IR offices are experiencing various stages of success (or failure) at advancing data governance at their respective institutions. Experienced IR professionals from three distinct universities will share their institutions place on the data governance continuum and lessons learned along the way.

This session will explore collaborating with stakeholders, building momentum, championing change, and a touch of wrangling AI. Attendees will gain valuable insights into the data governance process and learn practical tips for harnessing data as a strategic asset for their institution.

**Presenter(s):** Bethany Crowell; Smriti Ingrole;

*Data is the New Oil: The Future of AI, Ethics, and Institutional Research  
Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is advancing at unprecedented speed, reshaping higher education through predictive models, generative tools, and data-driven decision-making. Yet the mantra that “data is the new oil” underscores both AI’s promise and its risks: flawed or siloed data, misinformation, bias, and limited interpretability. This session addresses the urgent need to balance technical innovation with ethical responsibility. It will trace AI’s evolution, examine challenges of data quality and governance, and present frameworks that promote fairness, transparency, and explainability in institutional research practice.

**Presenter(s):** Linli Zhou; Yongchao (Yimi) Zhao;

*Early Career Professionals Roundtable  
Roundtable | Gallaudet Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

The Early Career Professionals Roundtable is an open, peer-led discussion for early-career institutional research and analytics professionals. This session offers a supportive space to ask questions, share experiences, and exchange ideas related to career development, navigating the profession, and building skills and confidence. Participants will have the opportunity to learn from one another, make connections, and leave with practical insights to support their growth within the AIR community and the broader field.

**Presenter(s):** Jennifer Chu;

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IR is the key to strategic enablement

*Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Data often slows institutions down, creating friction instead of momentum. This session reframes IR as the institutional yes button: the unit that transforms data into strategic enablement. We will show how infrastructure, governance, automation, and culture elevate IR beyond reporting, using Utah Tech's journey as a case study. Examples include aligning faculty workload, automating compliance reporting, and combining curricular and co-curricular engagement data. Participants will leave with a clear framework and practical steps—including how to begin scripting automated data flows in R—that position IR to reduce friction and expand their institution's capacity to deliver on strategy.

**Presenter(s):** Matt Nickodemus;

Leveraging Climate Data for Insights into Staff Turnover and Retention

*Speaker Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

Staff are the backbone of higher education institutions, yet their experiences with workload equity, work-life balance, and turnover risk are often underdiscussed. Using workplace climate assessment data from staff members at the University of Michigan (U-M), this research will examine how staff perceptions of role satisfaction, belonging, fairness, workload, supervisor relationships, psychological safety, and professional development intersect with staff's intentions to leave their roles.

**Presenter(s):** Anli Peng; Kolbe Sussman; Brittany Dernberger;

Listening Session: Re-envisioning NCEES

*Roundtable | Capitol Hill Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

Participate in and contribute to a Listening Session focused on a re-envisioning of the National Center for Education Statistics conducted in partnership with the American Statistical Association.

**Presenter(s):** Christopher M. Mullin; Steve Pierson; Gail Mulligan;

Mapping Student Home Locations to Support Strategic Enrollment Management

*Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

Community colleges are mission-driven to serve their local residents, while rapid population growth and shifting workforce demands can challenge traditional service area definitions. This session presents a case study from Paradise Valley Community College (PVCC), part of the Maricopa County Community College District, which historically relied on a 10-mile radius service area. Using a dashboard that integrates student enrollment data with geographic information obtained through the Google Maps APIs, PVCC redefined its service boundaries to better reflect growth in northern Phoenix. The session will discuss how the geographic dashboard can inform enrollment management strategies, such as supporting outreach to underserved communities and guiding partnerships with employers and schools. Attendees will gain practical insights and tools for applying geographic data to strengthen enrollment management decision-making at their own institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Xiaojie Li;

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## Mapping Student Pathways Using Data Mining Approaches

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This presentation examines student pathways into and through baccalaureate programs across the ten-campus University of Hawai'i System, focusing on 8,968 undergraduates enrolled from 2015–2025. Guided by the question, “What course-taking patterns most contribute to upward transfer in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences (FANH) majors?”, the study analyzes curricular trajectories leading to successful transfer into bachelor's programs. Drawing on Wang's STEM transfer research, it uses longitudinal transcript data and data mining to identify course-taking patterns, friction points, and equity gaps. By blending institutional research frameworks with modern analytic methods, the study sheds light on student progression in a transdisciplinary field spanning sustainability, agriculture, environment, and human well-being. It also shows how institutional research can support grants, foster cross-campus collaboration, and guide equity-minded strategies for student success.

**Presenter(s):** John Stanley; Christi Palacat

## Metrics Strategies: Aligning Data, Tactics, and Purpose for IR Success

*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Metrics Strategies are a mindset and framework essential for high-impact Institutional Research (IR). More than just dashboards or rankings, this new field focuses on connecting metrics, tactics, strategies, and methodologies to create a framework that supports continuous improvement at every institutional level. This session will introduce Metrics Strategies as a comprehensive approach to data-driven decision-making, providing IR professionals with the tools to translate local efforts into global institutional success. We will define core components—Metric, Tactic, Strategy, Methodology, and Outcome—and illustrate how integrating existing frameworks, such as DMAIC and SMART Goals, strengthens campus-wide alignment. Attendees will learn how to strengthen the organizational impact of their data work, improving clarity, focus, and return on investment (ROI). This topic is critical for advancing the IR/data function by ensuring efforts contribute to broader institutional goals.

**Presenter(s):** Richard Howell;

## Promoting Data Literacy Across Campus: Strategies to Engage All Audiences

*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

As data becomes 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):** Kristi Norris; Matt Anson; Danielle Martinez;

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## Smarter Analytics with AI: NotebookLM for Enrollment, Finance, and Planning

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 4 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

AI is transforming how higher education leaders analyze data and make decisions. This session explores Google NotebookLM, an AI research assistant that turns institutional data—such as enrollment reports, budgets, and strategic plans—into clear, actionable insights. Attendees will learn how NotebookLM can streamline reporting, track enrollment and demographic trends, and generate concise executive briefs with citations. Practical examples from the Office of Institutional Research will highlight its role in reducing information overload and accelerating decision-making.

**Presenter(s):** YASEEN AL-WESABI;

## The Maturation of Data Workflows for Compulsory State Reporting

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

Time is finite and preciously valuable, so finding ways to squeeze in more work into the same amount of time is a challenge that resonates with all. While some projects may ultimately be optional, compulsory reporting is certainly not one of them. These responsibilities continue to evolve and typically grow over time, so finding ways to complete required submissions with more efficiency is usually a task worthy of investment. In this presentation, we will discuss the evolutionary and maturation of our data collection, cleaning, and reporting processes for the recurring state fillings. We will discuss lessons learned, challenges experienced, stories of success, and areas we still wish to improve. By sharing our experience, we hope to inspire others to fine-tune their own compulsory reporting processes to aid in bringing increased work efficiencies to their own offices and departments.

**Presenter(s):** Bobby Childress; Sasha Naourizbaeva; Jeremy Davis; Tarak Myneni;

## The Value Equation: Hard Data to Redefine Graduate ROI

*Sponsor Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Higher education institutions are navigating a crossroads marked by regulatory uncertainty, increasing scrutiny, and questions about the value of a degree, making it essential to quantify the true worth of programs and degrees. This session will showcase how institutional researchers can move beyond unreliable, self-reported data to utilize comprehensive longitudinal financial data on graduates' income, debt, and financial health. Stay for a bonus, problem-solving demo where we use our latest Graduate Outcomes platform to answer real-world questions about maximizing graduate outcomes across specific programs and student segments.

**Presenter(s):** Jason Berman; Matt Jackson;

## Transforming Accreditation with an Automated Assessment System

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This work presents an automated assessment system developed over three years to support the annual ABET accreditation process across departmental and faculty levels. The system's primary objective is to mitigate the administrative burden on instructors during yearly data collection by integrating with the

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Canvas Learning Management System (LMS), facilitating the input and retrieval of student outcome and performance indicator data. The aggregated data is subsequently processed to generate tables and visualizations utilizing Oracle SQL and Tableau, made accessible to faculty and accreditation committees through a dedicated web portal. While originally designed for ABET accreditation, ongoing development has expanded the system's functionality to accommodate additional assessment frameworks university-wide, with the long-term objective of establishing the platform as a generalized, institution-level assessment solution.

**Presenter(s):** Tyler Judd;

*Understanding Ranking Volatility: How Methodology Inflates Apparent Change  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Research & Policy*

U.S. News & World Report's National Universities rankings use standard competition ranking, which creates gaps in the ranking sequence when institutions tie. This methodological choice dramatically inflates apparent year-to-year volatility, potentially leading institutions to respond to changes that largely reflect mathematical artifact rather than meaningful performance differences. This study compares standard competition ranking to dense ranking (which eliminates gaps after ties). Results show that standard competition ranking produces 11 times more apparent volatility than dense ranking. While this analysis does not address well-documented critiques regarding the validity of underlying ranking metrics, it reveals how ranking methodology itself creates substantial volatility independent of institutional performance changes. These findings have significant implications for IR professionals who must interpret ranking changes and advise leadership on strategic responses.

**Presenter(s):** Don Rudawsky;

*What's the ROI: Developing a Credential of Value Dashboard for Georgia  
Speaker Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

Higher education faces growing scrutiny regarding whether degree programs provide sufficient value to justify their costs. A new federal law enacted in 2025 stipulates that access to federally backed student loans will be restricted for undergraduate programs where completers earn less than a high school graduate and for graduate programs where completers earn less than bachelor's graduates. The University System of Georgia (USG) has calculated the ROI and earnings premium for bachelor's degree programs using a method informed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) work on identifying credentials of value. This session will walk the audience through the data and methods of calculating ROI and demonstrate a dashboard USG developed that provides policy analysts enhanced capabilities to analyze the ROI by institution sector, institution, and program.

**Presenter(s):** David Tanner; Lori Prince Hagood; Angela Bell; Scott King; Ethan Christmas;

3:45 PM - 4:30 PM

*18 FERPA-Approved Responses to "I Can't Give You That Data"  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

". . . you won't believe number 99.31(a)(1)!" One of the most frequently encountered obstacles to institutional data collection and use is limited understanding of allowable data sharing under FERPA. This

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session reviews the 18 different authorities that FERPA provides for sharing data, focusing on those most useful for collecting internal data for use by institutional researchers. Armed with the ability to cite the appropriate FERPA regulations chapter-and-verse, institutional researchers will be better able to collect—and protect—student data while respecting student privacy. Bonus content: two HEA-approved responses to "I can't disclose FAFSA data"!

**Presenter(s):** Jeffrey Johnson;

*Assessing Campus Impacts of the 2026 Reconciliation Law  
Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

This session presents a systematic approach to quantifying institutional impacts of the 2026 federal reconciliation bill on higher education—covering Pell eligibility changes, new limits on student, Parent PLUS, and graduate student borrowing, loss of renewable energy and endowment tax credits, and effects on executive compensation and small-dollar donor behavior. Attendees will see how multicampus survey data can reveal vulnerabilities and guide advocacy efforts. The presentation will include a high-level overview of findings—such as anticipated revenue losses and gains tied to Pell grant changes, projected loan exposure, capital project tax implications, compensation-related excise tax burdens, and fundraising trends. Institutional research professionals will learn how to replicate the methodology, design skip logic surveys, and translate results into actionable financial models.

**Presenter(s):** Carolyn Mata; Colby Cesaro;

*At the Tipping Point: Do Rank Thresholds Drive Change at Public Colleges?  
Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

Research on college rankings has shown that symbolic thresholds such as Top-50 or Top-100 can influence student application behavior and institutional strategy (Monks & Ehrenberg, 1999; Luca & Smith, 2013; Sauder & Espeland, 2006). Yet most studies focus on national universities or liberal arts colleges, leaving a gap in understanding for public 4-year institutions. This session addresses that gap by examining the 2020–2025 U.S. News & World Report rankings to identify which ranking cutoffs are salient for publics and whether they align with those in other institutional sectors. Using regression discontinuity as an analytic frame, we will evaluate how year-to-year shifts across symbolic cutoffs affect applications, yield, and advancement outcomes. Attendees will gain an applied framework for identifying prestige thresholds, learn methodological strategies for testing their salience, and consider implications for institutional research, enrollment management, and policy practice.

**Presenter(s):** Sarah Sikes;

*Beyond the Pipeline: First-Generation Cultural Wealth & STEM Pathways  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Research & Policy*

This study examines how first-generation college students (FGCS) and continuing-generation students navigate STEM pathways using HSLs:09. We model four milestones—high school graduation, college enrollment, STEM major selection, and STEM degree completion—using survey-weighted sequential logistic regression to estimate stage-specific associations among academic preparation, psychosocial resources, and institutional context. Guided by Community Cultural Wealth, results reveal distinct

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patterns: for FGCS, rigorous high school math predicts completion, while math self-efficacy and science identity shape STEM major selection. Attending a public institution is associated with higher odds of STEM degree completion for both groups. Findings suggest FGCS persistence depends less on early identification than on access to rigorous preparation and supportive institutional contexts. This session highlights leverage points for advising, policy, and program design to advance equity in STEM.

**Presenter(s):** Douglas Havard;

[Do Waiver Programs Boost Enrollment? Evidence from RDD Analysis](#)

*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

Colleges increasingly look to improving yield through financial incentives such as scholarship programs or tuition waivers, yet the effectiveness of specific programs is often untested. This session uses Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) to evaluate whether specific waiver programs causally influence enrollment decisions. Using internal institutional data, the study estimates the impact of waiver offers at eligibility thresholds, with results broken down by student subgroups. Attendees will gain practical insights into using RDD in institutional research and learn how to apply findings to support equity-focused and cost-effective enrollment strategies.

**Presenter(s):** Pavan Kumar Reddy Dhanireddy;

[From Chaos to Clarity: Mastering Prompts for Reliable AI Use](#)

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

As AI tools become indispensable in Institutional Research, the difference between actionable insights and misleading outputs often hinges on one critical skill: prompt engineering. This session equips IR professionals with strategies to craft effective prompts that produce accurate, compliant, and replicable results. Using the CLEAR framework (Context, Language, Examples, Actions, Refinement), participants will explore common prompt failures, learn safeguards for data privacy, and apply governance practices that ensure trustworthy AI use. Attendees will practice rewriting prompts in real IR scenarios, accreditation narratives, compliance reporting, survey analysis and student success metrics. The session emphasizes hands-on learning, with ready-to-use templates and a personalized toolkit for daily tasks. By session's end, participants will confidently design prompts that reduce bias, and strengthen institutional capacity to deliver reliable, AI-driven insights for decision-making.

**Presenter(s):** Juhi Chadha;

[From Siloed Data to Integrated Insights: Building College Profiles](#)

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Institutional leaders and stakeholders need integrated, accessible, and actionable data to support planning, decision making, accreditation, and program review. This session focuses on how the Institutional Research and Planning team at The Ohio State University developed College Profile Dashboards within the Reporting and Analytics Environment (RAE)—a centralized AWS Redshift-based system built on Medallion Architecture (Bronze, Silver, Gold layers). The dashboards combine data across HR, Finance, Advancement, and Student domains. We will demonstrate how the College Profiles were conceptualized to integrate quantitative metrics with clear definitions and college level context, offering

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stakeholders a holistic view of strengths, opportunities, and progress across Academic Excellence Plan metrics.

**Presenter(s):** Michele Hansen; Jay Johnson; Katie Smillie;

Identifying Workforce Gap: Comparing IPEDS Degree and BLS Employment Data  
*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Research & Policy*

Despite a 30% increase in degrees awarded in high-demand fields over the past decade, a persistent gap remains between the University of Wisconsin (UW) System's graduate output and the state's workforce needs. This study provides a quantitative analysis of this alignment by comparing graduate supply data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) with workforce demand projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Through a detailed gap analysis, the study identifies and measures specific talent shortages and surpluses across critical sectors, including STEM, healthcare, finance, and data and computer science. The findings will yield data-driven policy recommendations for academic programming and resource allocation, along with a baseline model to forecast future workforce needs.

**Presenter(s):** Ling Ning;

Measuring Student Success Without Blind Spots: Beyond IPEDS and Freshmen  
*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

Graduation, retention, persistence, and time-to-degree may sound straightforward, but in practice, they aren't. IPEDS offers standardized definitions, but only for first-time, full-time undergraduates, leaving gaps for graduate, professional, and certificate programs. As certificate pathways and non-traditional enrollments grow, institutions face mounting challenges in measuring success for increasingly diverse student bodies. Health-related institutions, where accreditation and program structures magnify these issues, provide vivid case studies for exploring solutions. This session will showcase frameworks institutions can adopt, paired with dashboards that clarify multiple definitions. Attendees will walk away with transferable strategies and real-world examples they can easily adapt to their own campuses.

**Presenter(s):** Sarah Gallimore; Kelly Barton; Qiong (June) Zhou;

Modernizing Operational Data Analytics and Creating a Data-Driven Culture  
*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Leadership & Career Development*

This presentation shares Missouri S&T's journey in transforming operational data analytics, moving from foundational development to an innovative, data-driven environment. Attendees will gain insights into the drivers for modernization, challenges faced, and solutions implemented to enhance data accessibility, reporting, and predictive insights. We'll discuss the tools, methodologies, and strategies adopted to build a scalable data infrastructure and foster a high-performing analytics team. Join us to explore actionable best practices that drive sustainable change and establish a data-centric culture within an organization, whether starting from scratch or seeking to elevate existing analytics initiatives.

**Presenter(s):** Andrew Sommer; Brianna Reddick;

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RISE 2030: Designing a Strategic Dashboard for Engagement & Accountability  
*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

Waubonsee Community College recently launched RISE 2030, a strategic plan to guide institutional progress through the decade. A central feature is an interactive dashboard that communicates goals, progress, and outcomes to students, employees, and community partners. This session highlights the dashboard's design and implementation, emphasizing accessibility, transparency, and inclusivity. Attendees will see how the team prioritized usability with clear navigation, visual progress indicators, and graphics that transform complex data into equity-minded insights. Beyond technical design, the session connects the dashboard to the larger strategic plan, showing how it serves as both a tool for accountability and a platform for institutional storytelling. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to make data more engaging and transparent, while fostering trust, collaboration, and alignment with mission and vision.

**Presenter(s):** Stacey Randall; Alexander Marine;

Understanding Transfer Student Success: Insights from IPEDS Data  
*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

We examined the institutional characteristics of colleges and universities that influence bachelor's degree completion rates among non-first-time, full-time students (i.e., transfer-in students). Using the 2015–2016 IPEDS Outcome Measures, we analyzed 4, 6, and 8 years graduation rates for transfer-in students across 1,981 four-year institutions. We grouped locale values into four categories (City, Suburb, Town, Rural). Results show that transfer-in students at private nonprofit institutions graduate at rates higher than those at public colleges. Transfer-in proportion was negatively associated with completion rates at all time points. Rural institutions and colleges demonstrated lower graduation rates than city-based colleges. Additionally, compared to Far West, institutions in the Southeast and Southwest also exhibited lower graduation rates. Our findings highlight the critical role institutional structures play in shaping transfer student outcomes.

**Presenter(s):** Alexia Carrillo Villalobos;

Who Says Yes? Using Predictive Analytics to Understand Matriculation  
*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Understanding which incoming freshmen are most likely to matriculate is critical to strategic recruitment planning, especially amid shifting enrollment trends. In this session, we present a logistic regression model developed to predict matriculation using institutional data on student demographics, geography, and academic background. Attendees will learn how to build a predictive model, interpret the results, and most importantly, apply findings to improve yield through more targeted communication and resource allocation. Real-world outcomes and practical templates will be shared.

**Presenter(s):** Jessica Schmidt;

Workforce Planning for South African Universities  
*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

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This session will cover a strategic workforce planning framework tailored for South African higher education institutions, integrating HEMIS staff and student data; national labor market intelligence from DHET, Stats SA, and the Department of Employment and Labour, as well as real-time data from LinkedIn and online job portals. Attendees will learn how data-driven tools, such as predictive analytics dashboards, planning hackathons, and skills development pathways, can align workforce strategies with NDP 2030 and respond to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The objective is to equip institutional leaders with evidence-based methods to improve resource allocation, strengthen succession management, enhance institutional resilience, and support sustainable development.

**Presenter(s):** Munienge Mbodila;

*Your Expertise, Amplified: A New Era for Institutional Research*

*Sponsor Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

What if the next question you are asked : “How does our ROI stack up against our peers?” or “What’s our alumni economic impact on the state?” could be answered in 30 seconds, in plain English, with citation-ready data? This session introduces Grad Graph, an AI-powered outcomes intelligence platform that lets IR professionals ask natural-language questions and get instant, defensible answers drawn from IPEDS, BLS, and 100M+ alumni career records. Through live demonstrations, attendees will see how conversational AI replaces hours of SQL, spreadsheet wrangling, and one-off data pulls, surfacing degree ROI, peer benchmarks, top employers, graduate school destinations, and economic impact on demand. We’ll walk through real IR use cases including program review, enrollment marketing, accreditation, and legislative reporting. Leave with a practical vision for how AI can transform your office from reactive data provider to strategic storyteller.

**Presenter(s):** Samson Pollak; Dale Pollak; Kendell Boyson;

*Catalyzing a Data Infrastructure to Support LGBTQ Inclusion*

*Panel Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4) | Research & Policy*

There is a dearth of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data in postsecondary institutions, obscuring disparate outcomes for LGBTQIA+ students that are documented through surveys and qualitative studies. Further, the data that do exist are largely conducted outside of IR offices. To begin addressing this dearth of data, the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences awarded grants to five higher education institutions (four universities and one community college district) through its Catalyzing a Data Infrastructure to Support LGBTQ Inclusion initiative. This program aims to support the development of data infrastructure for the ethical collection and use of SOGI data with the long-term goal of using these data to support more inclusive STEMM pathways for LGBTQIA+ students. Join colleagues from awardee institutions to learn from their varying SOGI data approaches and takeaways from their grant implementation journeys within their unique institutional contexts.

**Presenter(s):** Stephen Bass; Jason Garvey; Trent Kennedy; Travis York;

*Enrollment Revenue Impact: Developing a Tuition Model*

*Panel Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

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This session presents a Tuition Model designed to help institutions forecast tuition revenue and inform strategic planning amid enrollment and funding uncertainties. Leveraging SQL and Power BI, the model integrates historical data, tuition schedules, and projected enrollment to simulate revenue outcomes based on changes to key tuition group rates (e.g., in-state, out-of-state, undergraduate, graduate, military). Attendees will learn how to build an interactive dashboard that allows users to adjust tuition rates and instantly visualize revenue impacts. The presentation covers data sourcing, student-tuition matching, forecasting methods, and the building and designing of user-facing tools. A key focus will be on how the Tuition Model supports data-driven decision-making—enabling institutional leaders to evaluate the financial implications of tuition policy changes, optimize pricing strategies, and align revenue planning with enrollment goals.

**Presenter(s):** Derek Deeney; Ekaterina Sule; Chad Muntz; Williams Ojo;

Measuring Postsecondary Value: Lessons from the Value Data Collaborative  
*Panel Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

The Value Data Collaborative (VDC) seeks to equip colleges, institutional systems, and state agencies with the tools to better understand—and strengthen—the value of higher education for all students. VDC participants use administrative data to make informed assessments about the economic value of postsecondary education, grounded in their students’ unique experiences, institutional and regional contexts, and the specific challenges they face. This session will feature short presentations from recent VDC participants, describing research insights and implications for policy and practice. These presentations will be followed by a panel discussion and audience questions. This session will provide insights for others looking to measure economic value at their institutions, highlight findings and insights, and explore future opportunities for data and research to shape a more valuable higher education landscape for all students.

**Presenter(s):** Kim Dancy; Natalie Cartwright; Navi Dhaliwal;

4:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Networking reception hosted by AIR Board of Directors in the Networking Hub & Exhibit Hall  
*Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | 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!

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

AAUDE Meeting at AIR  
*Auxiliary Meeting | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine)*

This meeting of members of the Association of American Universities Data Exchange provides an opportunity for members to meet informally and consider salient business matters.

**Presenter(s):** Jonathan Schwarz;

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### AIRUM Member Dinner

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Tulip Room (Mezzanine)*

This will be a get together for all members of AIRUM who attend AIR Forum to meet and mingle. This serves as a gathering of people who live in multiple states to connect or catch up with old friends in a small group setting.

**Presenter(s):** Samuel Shanks;

### Black IR Professionals Networking Event

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine)*

Please join us for an informal networking session designed to foster connection and community. This is a great opportunity to meet peers, exchange experiences and insights, discuss shared challenges, and build meaningful, lasting professional relationships.

**Presenter(s):** Karen Egypt;

### Graduate Student Gathering

*Auxiliary Meeting | Howard University Room (ML1)*

Join this informal gathering with fellow graduate students (full-time, part-time, or those who might be considering graduate education) who love data-informed decision making as much as you do! Connect with fellow grad students and faculty members to share ideas for research and graduate study, get words of wisdom from experienced faculty, and learn more about the connections between data-informed decision support and AIR!

**Presenter(s):** Karen Webber; Victor Borden;

### North East Association for IR Affiliated Special Interest Group

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine)*

Join your colleagues from the North East for an update on the activities of the organization related to mentoring, professional development and the upcoming conference in Albany, NY in November 2026.

**Presenter(s):** Dan Sisco;

### Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR)

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine)*

Join us for an informational meeting with the Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR). SAIR Board members will share updates on the annual conference, professional development offerings, and opportunities to get involved.

**Presenter(s):** James Hunt; Eric Godin; Samantha Nix;

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# Thursday, May 28, 2026

8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

Another Meeting- UGH!!!

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Leadership & Career Development*

In higher education, attending or leading meetings is part of the job responsibility. In fact, meetings are considered a critical element of effective organizational communication. With the option of virtual meetings, one can go from one meeting to the next without a breath or a break. For some of us, we get frustrated with a calendar filled with meetings and wonder how any work can get done. On the other hand, we are also upset if we are not invited to a meeting, especially after finding out that the meeting topic was relevant for our specific area of expertise. Basically, meetings can be classified as either productive or pure torture. Why are so many meetings boring, unproductive, and at times, contentious? More importantly, how can we make them better? This presentation will dive into answering those questions as well as providing a guide to make your meetings more effective, inclusive, and even a little bit fun.

**Presenter(s):** Kelli Cox;

Better Together: A Partnership Between IT and Institutional Research

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

This presentation outlines how Portland State University's Business Intelligence (BI) and Institutional Research (IR) teams foster genial, authentic collaboration. Partnering together to transform how data is managed and utilized across the organization. The BI team brings a technical architectural perspective to the governance discussion. As neutral facilitators from the Office of Information Technology they highlight data flow, quality issues and propose standardized ways of defining metrics that a single department may not consider. The IR team possesses a deep knowledge of institutional data; applying various applications of study to ensure accuracy in meeting official agency standards for reporting.

**Presenter(s):** Allyson Meyers; Alison Nimura; Christina White;

Beyond Reporting: Reimagining IR's Role in Student Success

*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

Institutional research (IR) offices are essential to advancing student success, yet many face chronic under-resourcing, heavy compliance demands, and barriers to building a data-informed culture on campus. This discussion will explore strategies IR leaders can use to balance reporting obligations with institutional effectiveness research, engage stakeholders to strengthen collaboration, and take practical steps to grow data capacity even in resource-constrained contexts. Participants will share challenges and promising practices, examine examples of institutions that have shifted data culture, and leave with new ideas for advancing data-informed decision-making on their campuses.

**Presenter(s):** Ayana Tapper; Sam Comai;

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Beyond the Numbers: Faculty Achievement in Fine Arts  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Traditional university metrics, often based on STEM outputs like publications, citations, and grant totals, fail to capture the core impact of Fine Arts faculty (e.g., performances, exhibitions, community outreach). Without context-aware measurement, decisions regarding resource allocation and tenure are misaligned. This session presents a hybrid model developed at FSU to champion a new framework for faculty achievement in creative fields. We detail the pilot project undertaken by the College of Music to build a repository of success markers defined by the faculty themselves, balancing quantitative data (Faculty performance databases, grants) with qualitative assessment (external reviews, audience impact, alumni success). Attendees will gain practical strategies for developing nuanced, inclusive metrics and strengthening accreditation narratives.

**Presenter(s):** Richard Howell;

Building a Culture of Data Literacy: Equipping Partners for Informed Action  
*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

How can institutional research offices help university partners make informed decisions in a short amount of time? The goal of this presentation will be to delineate how our work proactively addresses this problem by equipping university partners with data literacy skills through data literacy workshops. We will share the core tenets of our workshops—research design, clear interpretation of descriptive statistics, and the essentials of data governance and integrity—providing a replicable model for building effective data literacy programs across institutions. One key collaboration will be highlighted, our partnership with the Center for Student Wellbeing, demonstrating how our data literacy workshops impacted their work to support students. Finally, we will discuss how these workshops contribute to a culture of data literacy, benefiting both the individual partner and institution at large.

**Presenter(s):** Mary Tarsha; Adrea Hernandez; Sarah Besse;

Data Governance as a Service: Building Trust, Access, and Usability  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 4 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

In this session, we will share institutional models and initiatives for positioning Data Governance as a service to data users. These frameworks foster trust, enable access, and advance data-engaged decision-making by placing users at the center of institutional strategies. We will highlight four components of support: 1) documentation and resources to demystify data assets, 2) communications and workshops to make resources discoverable, 3) intake processes with cross-functional evaluation to resolve persistent data issues, and 4) community-building to foster collaborative stewardship. Attendees will hear specific examples from Data Governance Program Managers at two institutions, along with practical strategies for adopting components that best serve their own.

**Presenter(s):** Heather Epstein-Diaz; Rachel Groenhout;

Decision Support by Design: Empower Teams and Increase Data Maturity  
*Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

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Denison University's holistic data team combines the expertise of Institutional Research, Data Governance, Reporting, and Data Architecture to provide centralized, comprehensive decision support. This session explains how a cross-divisional "team of teams" centralizes data services to produce functional deliverables (dashboards, validated datasets, shared definitions) while maturing the institutional data ecosystem (policies, processes, culture). Presenters will review Denison's Data and Decision Support playbook, which includes an operating model, a project-based approach, and a cross-divisional project case study, along with relevant templates and artifacts. Attendees will identify a project that delivers functional outcomes and reusable program assets, map roles for a "team-of-teams" model, and start developing their own playbook using provided templates.

**Presenter(s):** Kelli Van Wasshenova;

*Developing Business Intelligence at an Open Access Municipal University  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Washburn University, in partnership with rpk GROUP, is developing a framework for implementing business intelligence (BI) that leverages existing data systems to provide timely, accurate reporting of key functional metrics, while simultaneously building capacity among executive leadership to use the data to make decisions and understand the return on investment of their decisions. This session will share how Executive Cabinet, IR and IT leaders are collaborating in new ways to shift Washburn towards a culture of strategic, data-informed decision-making designed for long-term sustainability.

**Presenter(s):** Christa Smith; Samantha Bradley;

*Federal FERPA Guidance for Using AI in Institutional Research  
Speaker Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Technology & Tools*

FERPA, the main data privacy law for U.S. higher education, dates to the days of paper records, and FERPA guidance from the U.S. Department of Education still lags behind technology. Nonetheless, USDE compliance guidance establishes principles that are reliable guides to using AI for institutional research while respecting students' privacy rights. The session reviews the history of federal policy statements, technical assistance, and complaint findings on FERPA, identifying best practices for moving forward with cutting-edge technology and paper-record policy.

**Presenter(s):** Jeffrey Johnson;

*From Static Reports to Agile Insights: A Power BI Case Study  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 3 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Holistic. Scalable. Agile. These are the unique data reporting needs of the Wake Forest University School of Professional Studies. Since its opening in 2022, the WFU SPS has grown to almost 1,000 current students, 350+ graduates, and 14+ active programs. The near-constant change and growth require data reports that are up-to-date, accurate, and accessible. This session will provide actionable strategies for moving beyond historical reports and building a more agile and responsive data culture. The session will include a live demonstration of our Power BI reports and an exploration of our reporting ecosystem, connecting data between Power BI and systems like Workday Student and Watermark CES. In this

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session, you will gain a framework for planning automated reports, selecting the right metrics for decision-making, and communicating the impact to campus leaders.

**Presenter(s):** Katarina Swaringen;

#### How New IR Leadership Builds Trust and Partnerships Across Campus

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

New IR leadership requires a strategic, relational approach to building campus trust. This session shares a practical 90-day framework, developed during a recent transition, to shift IR from a reactive compliance function to a highly-trusted strategic partner. Attendees will learn concrete, three-phased tactics for cultural change: Deep Listening (diagnosing needs), Defining Value (aligning with mission), and Building Alliances (fostering shared responsibility and governance). Gain an actionable roadmap to cultivate a culture where everyone feels empowered to use data, maximizing IR's influence and driving institutional effectiveness.

**Presenter(s):** Ya-Chi Hung;

#### Impact of Terminated Grants on Faculty

*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

In January 2025, Executive Orders caused changes in federal funding agency priorities and resulted in the termination of grants held by researchers across the country. Tenure-track faculty, especially early career faculty, rely on grant funding to maintain the scholarly productivity necessary for promotion. During the tenure review process, committee members consider each candidate's active grants and potential for future funding as evaluation criteria. To prepare tenure and promotion committees for reviewing cases, it is imperative that they are aware of the differential impact these grant terminations have had on faculty, especially in regard to gender, race-ethnicity, and field of study. We will present a process for using institutional data to create a resource on terminated grants, propose rapid data collection methods for exploring the impact of these terminations on tenure-track faculty, and discuss next steps for disseminating this information to leaders and committee members.

**Presenter(s):** Jordan Hudgins; Mary Bautista; Brittany Dernberger;

#### JASP: Accessible, Free, and Open-Source Stats Tool

*Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Technology & Tools*

Institutional research offices must deliver timely, accessible, and reproducible analyses despite budget and staffing constraints. This session introduces JASP, a free open-source statistical tool with an intuitive point-and-click interface and robust features. Topics range from descriptive statistics and inferential analyses such as t-tests, ANOVA, and regression to JASP's output and reporting capabilities, including APA-style tables and visualizations. Through real-world examples and a live demonstration, attendees will see how JASP streamlines analysis and reporting. Ideal for IR professionals juggling limited coding support and the demand for transparent, verifiable analysis practices, this session offers practical strategies to integrate JASP into workflows as a cost-effective alternative to enterprise software. Participants will leave knowing how to navigate JASP's interface, run statistical analysis, and create high-quality outputs for internal reporting or publication.

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**Presenter(s):** James Salamon; Vilosh Veeramani;

Measuring What Matters: A Program's Financial Health

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

Higher-ed institutions across the country are facing increasingly new financial challenges whether through a demographic decline, administrative complexities associated with federal financial aid, or declining number of international students. So, how financially healthy are your academic programs? And how do you calculate this? This session presents a practical, data-driven framework for measuring program-level profit and loss, combining revenue analysis, cost allocation, and indirect expense distribution into a clear, reproducible model. Built on real-world examples from a 4 year private institution in the Northeast. This approach shows how institutional researchers can partner with finance, HR and academic units to build financial models that inform decision-making. Attendees will leave with the tools and logic needed to adapt this framework to their own context, and alternative options when certain data or partnerships are not readily available.

**Presenter(s):** Rizwanur Rob;

Painting a Predictive Portrait: Machine Learning for Student Intervention

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Assessment & Evaluation*

At Ivy Tech Community College, we have been utilizing predictive metrics on student data for over 10 years, but the former algorithm was complex to maintain and was not considered accurate or useful enough for widespread adoption by the business. In this context, we took on the task of revitalizing our predictive infrastructure to provide new inspiration to the business, leveraging Canvas Data and an AutoML system to create customized course predictions with extremely high accuracy, and creating a dashboard that presented comprehensive student information tailored to interventions. We hope to share lessons learned about the creation of strong predictive metrics that emphasize behavioral data over demographic data, and encourage those working on low-resource IR teams, such as in community colleges, how AutoML tools can simplify predictive analysis and create an architecture for rapid prototyping and deployment.

**Presenter(s):** Tim Kish; Samantha Turley;

What Drives part-time Retention? Impact of Institutions, Geography and COVID

*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

Part-time enrollment at both two- and four-year public institutions has increased substantially over the past decade, yet research on part-time student success remains limited, particularly at highly accessible, affordable institutions such as regional public universities (RPUs) and community colleges (CCs). Using the institutional performance in graduation rate (IPGR) framework, this study examines how student background, student finance, academic environment, and social environment impact part-time retention at 449 RPUs and 858 CCs from 2017 to 2023 -spanning pre-, during, and post-COVID periods. Using the institution-level panel data and two-way fixed effects models, we identify how predictors of retention shifted across these periods. These findings extend and validate the IPGR framework, offering actionable

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insights for institutions seeking to strengthen part-time student retention both during crises and in more stable periods.

**Presenter(s):** Shiya Liu; Katie Fisher; Ted Welsh; Sheena Kauppila;

8:45 AM - 9:45 AM

Coffee in the Networking Hub & Exhibit Hall

*Exhibit Hall | Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | 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!

AIR LEADs and Holistic Approach to IR Alumni Coffee Break

*Archives Room (ML4)*

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.

9:45 AM - 10:05 AM

Navigate, Understand, and Impact Performance with New Tools from US News

*Sponsor Product Demonstration | Exhibit Hall Expo Theater - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Academic Insights is your guide to the U.S. News rankings landscape, helping you navigate, understand, and influence your performance with greater clarity and confidence. The platform provides centralized access to the full breadth of data behind the rankings, including raw and calculated metrics, along with proprietary rank and score calculations for indicator ranks and specialty programs. Institutions gain a fuller view of what sits behind the rankings, stronger context for their results, and a clearer path forward aligned to their strategic goals. Come see our newest features: AI Assistant: AI powered tool that turns natural language questions into complex queries, quickly delivering insights and supporting data drawn from our platform's historical rankings data and methodology. Academic Insights Simulator: Score-modeling tool that allows users to test metric improvements, benchmark against peer groups, and better understand how strategic changes may influence overall scores.

**Presenter(s):** Debbie Aust; Jessica Locklear; Matt Taylor; Chloe Farmer

9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

Assessing Program Health Using Modern Analytics and Power BI

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

This session demonstrates how universities can assess program health through modern analytics and Microsoft Power BI. We will cover the development of key financial, enrollment, productivity, and student success metrics; along with indices designed to provide consistent comparisons across programs. Attendees will see how Missouri S&T built dynamic dashboards to evaluate performance, support resource allocation, and inform strategic planning. We will also address common challenges

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such as fragmented data and misaligned cost centers, offering practical solutions to improve accuracy. By the end, participants will understand how to apply these tools and methods to strengthen institutional decision-making, enhance transparency, and promote financial sustainability.

**Presenter(s):** Andrew Sommer; Wayne Jones; Rachel Morris;

*Beyond the Deadline: Future-Proofing Compliance for Workforce Pell & OB3*

*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

As compliance demands rise, institutional researchers must adapt efficiently. This session covers how the National Student Clearinghouse is expanding its free FVT-GE reporting platform—originally for Financial Value Transparency & Gainful Employment—to support Workforce Pell and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OB3). Attendees will learn about reporting new short-term credentials, adapting to OB3's student-level and earnings reporting, and using integrated tools for streamlined compliance and reduced manual work. Practical strategies will help institutions stay ahead of evolving federal requirements and improve data quality.

**Presenter(s):** Sean McTighe;

*Beyond the Hype: Using PSEO Data to Tackle Higher Ed's Tough Questions*

*Speaker Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Technology & Tools*

In an era of declining enrollments, ROI skepticism, and rising demands for accountability, institutional researchers need tools that move beyond descriptive reporting to powerful storytelling. The Postsecondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) data which are free, accessible, and easy to use, link graduates' fields of study with actual earnings and employment by industry/geography. This session will highlight practical applications of PSEO data that respond directly to executive, accreditor, parent, and student questions about the value of higher education. Use cases will include partnering with career services to communicate outcomes, equipping boards and executives with credible evidence to address ROI and workforce alignment, and using outcomes data to inform both the development of new academic programs and the review of existing ones. Attendees will leave with concrete strategies to incorporate PSEO into decision-making and to elevate IR's role in shaping the institutional narrative.

**Presenter(s):** Jason Simon; Christopher Peña;

*Collaborative Storytelling with National Survey of Student Engagement Data*

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Collaboration among stakeholders regarding data and assessment continues to be key priority of institutional research, educators and administrative leaders. Although many practices support collaboration, including data sharing, relationships, and communication, recent efforts to humanize survey data through person-centered analytic approaches, involving students in interpretation, and blending quantitative and qualitative data, offer new opportunities for collaboration and better storytelling with survey data. In this session, we will discuss novel approaches to collaboration among IR, faculty and student affairs on NSSE data and effective ways to blend quantitative and qualitative results, data visualizations, and use AI-sentiment analysis to bridge the gap between abstract numbers and lived

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student experiences. Participants will learn about effective approaches to collaboration and storytelling with NSSE data and exchange ideas about what they could try in their own practice.

**Presenter(s):** Jillian Kinzie; Ryan Smith;

Defining True and Aspirational Peer Institution Groups

*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Benchmarking is a well-established among higher education institutions used for strategic planning, goal setting, and institutional assessment. The effectiveness of benchmarking largely depends on how accurately institutional peer groups are constructed. While contextual factors such as the presence of medical schools and geographic location are essential in identifying potential peers, rigorous quantitative methods play a critical role in developing valid and meaningful peer groups. In this presentation, we demonstrate the use of two quantitative techniques—Factor Analysis and Cluster Analysis—to construct “true” and “aspirational” peer groups for a high-research private university to compare research funding. We also compare peer groups identified through contextual knowledge with those derived from quantitative methods. One of the key challenges we address is the misalignment that can occur between statistically derived peers and those traditionally selected.

**Presenter(s):** Daria Ivleva; Wen Qi;

Evolving Dashboard Ecosystems for Nimble Data Sharing – A Scrappy Approach

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

The University of Vermont (UVM) is undertaking a strategic transformation of its institutional reporting and business intelligence capabilities within the context of a newly established data governance framework. Historically reliant on static, semesterly data reports, UVM is evolving to meet growing internal and external demands for timely, operational insights. This presentation outlines the efforts of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) to modernize data delivery through the adoption of Power BI, the development of over 35 targeted dashboards, and the implementation of access controls to protect sensitive information. Despite operating without a centralized data warehouse and within a fragmented data infrastructure, UVM is making significant progress. Attendees will gain insight into the challenges, strategies, and outcomes of this ongoing transformation, with a focus on balancing transparency, usability, and privacy.

**Presenter(s):** Jason Garvey; Larry Granillo; Kate Eugenis;

Exploring Survey Possibilities with AI and Shiny R Apps

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 4 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

This session introduces participants to using generative AI to build custom Shiny R survey applications tailored to contextual goals. While many institutions use platforms like Qualtrics with robust features, such tools can limit opportunities to test new formats or pilot unconventional approaches valuable for decision makers and students. Participants will see how AI can help non-programmers with beginner-level Shiny knowledge quickly prototype small survey tools that act as proofs of concept for novel data collection ideas. The session will include a short Shiny introduction, an overview of AI tools that generate usable R code, and a live demo creating and deploying a simple survey app for a real-world higher-ed

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scenario. Attendees will learn how AI-assisted Shiny apps can expand data collection options that leverage existing systems. By the end, participants will gain applied knowledge of tools to explore AI-enabled prototyping for more flexible survey practices.

**Presenter(s):** Michael Littrell;

*From Outcomes to Action in IE Partnerships: Methods for Program Improvement  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Tired of one-size-fits-all assessment? At Nevada State University, the Institutional Research (IR) and Assessment offices partnered with faculty to build individualized, program-level assessment that informs action. Assessment guided outcome revision and course maps, while IR provided program-facing data pulls, dashboards, and professional development to make evidence usable for faculty. Over two years, this partnership evolved program assessment into a faculty-driven process that improves student outcomes. In this session, participants will learn the rationale and process for individualized program-level assessment, see how IR and Assessment roles complement one another, and review examples of data-informed practices. Participants will be able to describe essentials of LMS (Canvas)-outcomes tracking, identify faculty-friendly data visualization practices, reflect on institution-level impacts, and outline pragmatic steps to strengthen assessment on their own campuses.

**Presenter(s):** Nicole Espinoza; Danette Barber;

*From Sunset to Success: Retiring Legacy Dashboards and Launching Successors  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

How do you manage updating or refreshing institutional reporting tools? When is it time to retire content altogether? Institutions invest significant time and resources in building data infrastructures, yet as needs evolve, many products can outlive their purpose. This session explores the University of Arizona's student enrollment content overhaul which involved sunseting dashboards, data warehouse tables, and launching modern successors. By providing clear migration paths, transparent documentation, and direct communication with stakeholders on why updates were needed, we built trust and eased the transition. Participants will gain strategies on how to address resistance to change, requests for legacy data, and fostering partner buy-in, leaving with a practical roadmap for managing the data lifecycle at their own institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Zuleima Cota; Rico Silva;

*Future-Proofing your IR Career with Strategic Foresight  
Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

How can Institutional Research (IR) professionals prepare not just for tomorrow, but for many possible tomorrows? In this discussion session, members of the Future of AIR Committee will provide a brief introduction to the essentials of strategic foresight and guide participants through a collaborative activity. Using tools such as the Delphi method and scenario planning, participants will engage in both learning and practice, collecting ideas for future-proofing while also gaining firsthand experience with foresight techniques. Together, we will explore how foresight tools can help IR professionals anticipate change, strengthen their departments, and support institutional adaptability. Participants will leave with

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practical strategies for engaging in the strategic foresight process at the institutional, departmental, and individual career levels.

**Presenter(s):** Jillian Morn; Tara Webb; Ivana Fredotovic;

Generative AI and Engagement: Insights from a Multi-Institution Survey  
*Speaker Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4) | Research & Policy*

This session explores student engagement relative to their institutional and instructor policies on artificial intelligence (AI). Drawing on an experimental set of questions from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), we examine students' awareness of AI policies, clarity of communication, and perceived impact on their academic behaviors. Descriptive results are paired with analyses of how these perceptions relate to broader engagement indicators such as collaborative learning, academic challenge, and experiences with faculty. The session also highlights current trends in policy development and communication practices, offering insights for institutions navigating the evolving role of AI in higher education.

**Presenter(s):** Bob Gonyea; Malik M. Wali Awan; Kyle Beyersdorf;

How Northeast Lake View College Uses PDP Data to Drive Student Success  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

What does it look like when data becomes a driver of institutional change? This case study from Northeast Lakeview College (NLC) offers a behind-the-scenes look at how they have integrated Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) Analysis-Ready Files into their institutional research and planning processes. Attendees will gain practical insights into how the college uses PDP data to support continuous improvement, inform policy, and enhance student outcomes.

**Presenter(s):** Marty Fortner; Brandi Solar;

Leading with Care: Balancing Workload and Wellbeing in Higher Education  
*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Leadership & Career Development*

Higher education data professionals face increasing demands, shifting priorities, and relentless deadlines—often at the expense of personal wellbeing. This session provides practical strategies to balance workload, protect time and energy, and foster sustainable team practices. Drawing on leadership lessons and proven approaches, participants will learn how to navigate high-pressure environments, communicate boundaries effectively, and implement strategies that support both productivity and wellbeing. Attendees will leave with actionable steps to manage expectations, build resilience, and lead with care to create healthier, more sustainable work cultures.

**Presenter(s):** Karen Egypt;

Tableau vs. PowerBI: A Case Study in Transitioning Between BI Tools  
*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

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As reporting tools evolve, get acquired, or change pricing, large-scale migrations between BI platforms become inevitable. The more extensive your reporting suite, the greater the effort required to migrate reports from one tool to another. In this session, we'll share CMU's early portion of a multi-year journey moving from Tableau to Power BI. We'll cover what we've found to be the pros and cons of each tool, how data modeling and preparation differs between the two tools, what visualizations are easier or more challenging in one versus the other, how we're planning our reporting migration, and other practical tips and tricks in the tools.

**Presenter(s):** Brandon Hutton; Matthew Hoolsema;

*Taking the Pulse: Insights from the Launch of an Alumni Panel  
Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

SNAAP Pulse is a new panel survey effort capturing real-time perspectives from arts and design alumni across diverse institutions. Pulse provides timely insights into how postsecondary graduates navigate employment, career satisfaction, skill development, and workplace belonging. The first round of data collection engaged more than 5,300 alumni and reveals both the enduring value of higher education and the urgent need for alumni to adapt to shifting professional landscapes, particularly through technology skills and work practices. This presentation will share some lessons regarding the design processes and logistics of launching an alumni panel survey. Selected findings from SNAAP Pulse will also be shared, demonstrating how panel survey data collection can inform institutional strategy, alumni engagement, and national discourse on alumni experiences with the workforce and society.

**Presenter(s):** Christian Folk;

*The Senior Compass: A collaborative model for senior data collection  
Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

JMU's Senior Compass is a collaborative initiative between the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) and the Office of Planning, Analytics, and Institutional Research (PAIR), designed to support graduating seniors through a structured LMS-based process. It combines a learning outcomes assessment, a student experience survey, and essential graduation resources. Implemented in 2024-25, the Senior Compass yielded a 98% completion rate in its first year. This initiative exemplifies how cross-office collaboration can streamline data collection and enhance student support. This session will explore the development, implementation, and communication strategies behind the initiative, share early findings, and offer practical guidance for replication. Attendees will gain insights into launching similar efforts, overcoming institutional barriers, and fostering high student engagement.

**Presenter(s):** Chris Orem; Sarah Blackstone; Cindy Chiarello; Dena Pastor;

*Tracking Time to Degree: Metrics, Major Migration, and Student Success  
Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

Earning a college degree opens doors to higher earnings, but the costs—tuition, fees, and foregone income—can be substantial. Reducing the time students spend earning a degree can help minimize these costs and improve institutional efficiency. This session highlights findings from a recurring time-to-degree project across three public research universities. We will explore multiple measures of time to

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degree, including elapsed years, number of enrolled semesters, and attempted versus earned credit hours. The session will also address critical factors such as major migration, disciplinary differences, and data weighting approaches. By examining time-to-degree trends alongside retention and graduation rates, we will explore how these metrics together provide a more nuanced understanding of student success and highlight strategies institutions can use to support timely degree completion and improve advising practices.

**Presenter(s):** Iryna Muse;

Using Productivity Metrics and Labor Market Data to Inform Decision Making

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

This presentation provides an opportunity for attendees to explore how higher education institutions can and are using workforce and cost-productivity benchmarks, paired with real-time labor market data, to drive strategic decisions and demonstrate institutional value. This session will highlight practical tools and dashboards used by colleges to align programs with regional workforce needs, optimize resource allocation, and communicate impact to stakeholders. Real data from a participating two-year college will be featured to illustrate how these metrics inform planning, program review, and advocacy.

**Presenter(s):** Deborah Burks; Michelle Taylor; Jacque Eidson;

Using the Carnegie Classifications as a Tool to Study Higher Education

*Speaker Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Research & Policy*

Over the last year, the reimagined Carnegie Classifications have provided a new lens to study the higher education sector across the country. Through the new, multidimensional Institutional Classification, the field has been able to better compare peer campuses and identify sector-level trends. Additionally, the Student Access and Earnings Classification offers a way to examine how well institutions are enabling student success. This session will focus on how the updated classifications have allowed for analysis and new insights, what we have learned, feedback from the field, and how researchers and institutions can continue using the classifications as a tool to better inform their work. Attendees will also hear what is being explored for the next update in 2028.

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

What's a Course Worth? Building Academic Activity Margins from Your SIS

*Sponsor Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Knowing which academic programs are financially sustainable has always been harder than it should be. Ohio University's Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics team set out to change that — building an activity margin equation that calculates net revenue per course section using data from their Student Information System (SIS). The result: a managerial accounting framework assembled nightly from HR, payroll, and general ledger data and validated across the registrar, bursar, financial aid, and payroll offices. What makes this approach actionable is its depth. Leaders can explore activity margins university-wide or drill into college and department comparisons, with dashboards that surface financial KPIs and support real-time scenario planning. This session walks through the data model, methodology

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decisions, and institutional conversations that become possible when academic cost data becomes a shared, trusted foundation for decisions that protect both mission and financial health.

**Presenter(s):** Carl Forney;

Xitracs™: Streamlining Accreditation and Assessment Work for over 20 Years  
*Sponsor Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 3 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Xitracs is a user-friendly, cost-effective (Some will say VERY 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, Banner and LMS integrations, 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;

10:10 AM - 10:30 AM

From Data to Decisions: A Smarter Approach to Program Evaluation  
*Sponsor Product Demonstration | Exhibit Hall Expo Theater - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Many institutions rely on disconnected data sources to evaluate academic programs, making it difficult to deliver timely, decision-ready insights. This 20 minute product demonstration will showcase how Gray DI unifies market demand, program economics, and student outcomes into one cohesive view.

See how you can rapidly assess program viability, uncover hidden opportunities, and support leadership with insights that go beyond traditional reporting. This session will highlight practical ways to reduce analysis time, increase confidence in recommendations, and strengthen the role of IR in strategic decision making.

**Presenter(s):** Michael Hunter;

10:45 AM - 11:05 AM

Academic Analytics: Align Academic, Research, and External Engagement Goals  
*Sponsor "Ask an Expert" session | Exhibit Hall Expo Theater - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Institutions are increasingly expected to make coordinated, data-informed decisions across academic programs, research priorities, and external engagement. This session explores how Institutional Research can serve as a true integrator aligning stakeholders around shared priorities by utilizing a shared, trusted resources with intelligence for academic leaders and those who support them at every level of the institution. We'll discuss practical approaches for using Academic Analytics to connect program viability, research productivity, workforce needs, and partnership opportunities, ultimately supporting more coherent planning and resource allocation. Participants will leave with strategies for elevating IR's role as a strategic connector across the institution.

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**Presenter(s):** Kathy Felts;

10:45 AM - 11:30 AM

### Against the Odds: Student Engagement Through Multiple Crises

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

This study examines how student engagement in higher education shifts under prolonged and intersecting crises. Using multi-year data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), it tracks experiences across three turbulent phases: early economic and political instability (2013–2014), deepening socioeconomic collapse (2017–2018), and the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic and the August 4, 2020 Beirut explosion (2020–2021). Comparing patterns across time and between first-year and senior students, the research shows how external shocks influence academic involvement, learning relationships, and personal development. The findings reveal both vulnerability and resilience, offering insights for institutions and policymakers seeking to sustain engagement and educational quality amid systemic disruption.

**Presenter(s):** Diane Nauffal;

### AI Your Way: Crafting AI Projects that Work for You

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 4 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Managing the requirements of institutional research and strategic planning, along with institutional and state policy is a daunting task. Improve your efficiency by creating a customized artificial intelligence project tailored to your needs. This session, designed for beginners, requires no coding or programming background. Learn how to design a ChatGPT project that uses official sources and documents as reliable sources to support quality control.

The session will demonstrate the step-by-step process to create a project that can incorporate your institution's policies and procedures, while maintaining compliance with state, federal, and accreditation requirements. A template with customizable language to draft instructions for your AI project is included.

**Presenter(s):** Rollinda Thomas;

### Analytics Without Culture: A Recipe for Stalled Progress

*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

Without culture, your dashboards don't matter. Institutional research teams are experts in data management and analysis—but analytic maturity requires more than tools or governance. Culture determines whether data informs decisions or languishes unused. In this highly interactive session, participants will learn to identify and unpack the cultural elements—norms, language, symbols, attitudes, and other key factors—that define their institution's relationship with data. Drawing on examples across industries and institutions, the session provides a structure to assess culture and strategies to realign resources and practices. By the end, attendees will: 1) Understand the role of data culture in analytic ecosystems; 2) Apply a framework to evaluate their own organizational culture; and 3) Leave with actionable tactics to foster a stronger, more data-informed environment.

**Presenter(s):** Jason Simon;

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## Conversations about the Challenges and Value in LMS Data

*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

While student course performance often has a profound impact on key outcomes such as retention or degree completion, accessing and using this data can be technically challenging. At Ivy Tech Community College, we use the Canvas platform as our learning management system. This presentation will cover the basics of how we use Canvas Data 2, including an overview of the entity relationship diagram, which tables and fields we have found particularly useful, and how we have transformed and structured this data to facilitate analysis. We will discuss some of the practical challenges we faced in preparing this data for use. Finally, we will briefly describe some of the ways the college has applied this work to support student success in both operational reporting and predictive analytics.

**Presenter(s):** Tim Kish; Samantha Turley;

## Engagement on the Move: What Happens when Students Change Majors

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

Research shows that major change is a somewhat common phenomenon in higher education, with research showing 30-44% of students changing their major at least once. The consequences of such changes are mixed. This study uses a longitudinal data set that identifies senior students who changed their major at least once since their first year. (aka, Changers). Overall, results reveal a pattern of significantly lower quality of academic experiences and grades during the first-year for Changers compared to non-Changers. By their senior year, Changers still reported lower quality of academic experiences and grades compared to non-Changers, however the gap was substantially reduced. None of the indicators significantly favored Changers. This session will engage the audience in the interpretation of these results within the context of that role IR offices can play in collecting, disseminating, and making use data regarding major changers on their campus.

**Presenter(s):** James Cole;

## Higher Education Benchmarking, A Dashboard Approach

*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Technology & Tools*

This session focuses on how SREB transformed its Higher Education Fact book into an interactive Tableau dashboard that allows policymakers and institutional leaders to benchmark their state against peer states or the Southern region. Attendees will see how key metrics such as enrollment, affordability, and completion can be explored interactively, and will learn practical lessons for building dashboards that turn static data into actionable insights.

**Presenter(s):** Raheela Charania;

## Leading with Data: Building Strategic Capacity Through Data Fluency

*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Institutions across higher education face growing demands for evidence-based decision-making to advance student success, equity, and resource optimization. At the same time, colleges are investing

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heavily in analytics platforms, dashboards, and data warehouses often underutilized without the training and support to use them. This session highlights Haverford College's three-tiered Data Fluency Program, a scalable model that builds capacity from basic data access to advanced strategic leadership. The culminating Strategic Data Leadership Program requires participants to apply advanced skills to institutional priorities through capstones in areas such as retention, advising, and resource alignment. By linking technical training with leadership development, the program shows how data fluency grows from skill-building to a culture of accountability, elevating institutional research as a strategic partner. Attendees will also join an interactive Q&A to apply lessons to their campus.

**Presenter(s):** Kevin Iglesias;

Power from the Middle: A Model for IR Offices to Lead Change in the AI Era  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Leadership & Career Development*

Institutional Research (IR) offices often occupy a “middle” organizational position—close to senior leaders yet grounded in daily operations. While change literature frequently emphasizes top leadership (e.g., Kotter), middle managers also hold unique power to shape institutional change. This session introduces Nickerson's (2014) framework for leading from the middle, which categorizes stakeholders as superordinates, clients, subordinates, and complementors/blockers, each requiring tailored strategies. Using Bowdoin College's case of adopting large language models (LLMs) for qualitative analysis, we show how an IR office navigated IRB concerns, secured IT partnerships, reassured campus clients, and honored student privacy. The result was a process for ethically and effectively integrating LLMs into institutional research practice. Participants will be given time to apply the framework to changes they aim to lead on their campuses.

**Presenter(s):** Christina Finneran; Chloe Qian;

Small IR Office Roundtable  
*Roundtable | Gallaudet Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

The Small IR Office Roundtable is an open, peer-led discussion for professionals working in small institutional research offices. This session provides a space to share experiences, ask questions, and exchange practical ideas related to managing workload, balancing multiple roles, building capacity, and advancing data-informed decision-making with limited resources. Participants are encouraged to learn from one another, explore common challenges, and leave with strategies they can adapt to their own institutional contexts.

**Presenter(s):** Jennifer Chu; Kelli Cox;

Stronger Nation: Today, Tomorrow, and Beyond  
*Sponsor Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Research & Policy*

Lumina's 2040 goal introduced the idea of economic prosperity. Currently this is measured in terms of earnings, a measure we recognize it is necessary but not sufficient. Join this session where we review Stronger Nation as it exists today with a focus on measuring credentials of value. Then engage in a conversation to advise on near-term functional changes that would be meaningful. The session will end

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with sharing an update on research to date to expand ways to measure prosperity gleaned over the past year and efforts likely to take shape in the future.

**Presenter(s):** Christopher M. Mullin;

Student Engagement Trajectories: A Clustering Framework  
*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Student engagement is not static; students may recover (low→high) or decline (high→low) during the first term. This session introduces a practical framework for analyzing engagement transitions using institutional touchpoints such as advising, tutoring, registration behaviors, and LMS activity where available. Participants will learn how to build composite engagement scores, classify students into trajectory groups, and use clustering to profile student characteristics across these patterns. By connecting engagement transitions to first-term retention outcomes, the session highlights recovery and decline trends that inform proactive, targeted interventions. Attendees will leave with strategies to detect shifting engagement and apply data-driven approaches to strengthen first-term student success initiatives.

**Presenter(s):** Yan Li; David Smalley;

Systemwide Edify Implementation: Collaboration for Data Integration  
*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

This session proposes to share lessons learned, strategies, and outcomes from a systemwide implementation of Edify, a cloud-native data integration and analytics platform, across a multi-institutional higher education system. The focus will be on collaboration with diverse stakeholders—including institutional research professionals, IT leaders, and functional area leaders in student affairs, finance, and human resources—to ensure successful adoption, foster innovation, and drive data-informed decision-making at scale.

**Presenter(s):** Tanya Brown; Samantha Kalinowski;

The Partner I Never Knew I Needed: Assessment Chaos to Stakeholder Buy-In  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Higher education institutions are moving from experimental AI use to systematic implementation across operations. This session presents a case study of using AI as a strategic planning partner for a complex general education assessment project at a large public institution. The presenter will share how AI was used to tackle a comprehensive curriculum overhaul, including mapping over 90 learning objectives to 11 manageable outcomes, developing assessment frameworks, and creating stakeholder communication strategies. Attendees will see how AI collaboration transformed preliminary ideas into comprehensive proposals, resulting in more effective meetings and successful stakeholder buy-in.

**Presenter(s):** Chris Davidson;

TRUolopoly: A Scenario-Based Game for Institutional Planning  
*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

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As institutional researchers and planners, we are often tasked with preparing our institutions for what's next, yet many traditional planning tools do not account for the complexity and uncertainty we face. Join us for an interactive session exploring the application of strategic foresight in institutional research. This session introduces TRUolopoly, a scenario-based game designed to build futures literacy and deepen understanding of how emerging future implications are shaping today's operations and planning. Through play, participants will explore how strategic foresight can enrich institutional planning and research by exploring trends, implications and imagining alternative futures. The attendees will leave with tools designed to develop a holistic understanding of the current landscape while also considering long-term trends and emerging challenges. This session equips members with a practical tool to support more adaptive and resilient planning in their own institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Dana Prymak;

Using Promise and Dual Credit Programs to Find and Engage Opportunity Youth  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

Opportunity youth, or young people ages 16-24 who are neither enrolled nor employed, are a population who often face significant challenges in the labor market yet hold untapped potential for colleges and universities as prospective students; sometimes, these youth even have prior touchpoints to higher education through dual credit and promise programs. In this session, we will explore national and regional trends in college-going, showcasing how numbers of opportunity youth have risen during periods of economic uncertainty and disruption. We will consider how changing labor market conditions and new technology affect young people's job prospects and college-going behavior, and how postsecondary institutions can make the case for education as a viable alternative. Finally, we will discuss how practitioners can use data to identify this growing population, enabling institutions to re-engage them with outreach efforts that seek to (re)connect them to higher education.

**Presenter(s):** Navi Dhaliwal; Dillon Lu; David Mahan;

Using the Census Bureau's Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes Data Product  
*Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

This session will provide an overview of the Census Bureau's Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO), a novel data product that combines graduation records with jobs data to create publicly available statistics on the earnings, geographies, and industries of college graduates by institution, degree level, and field of study. Attendees will learn how to access the PSEO data, utilize the publicly available tools, and interpret the available statistics to support planning and research.

**Presenter(s):** Cody Orr;

Your AI Co-Analyst: A Practical Blueprint for Qualitative Analysis  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

This session tackles a common institutional research challenge: turning hundreds or even thousands of lines of open text data into clear, actionable insights. I will share a successful, repeatable method developed at Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business that makes qualitative analysis

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faster and more accessible. By leveraging generative AI tools, this approach allows IR professionals to collect and analyze more narrative data from surveys and focus groups than ever before, while maintaining analytical rigor and trustworthiness. Attendees will learn how to create a custom AI assistant, guide its analysis with a set of instructions, and generate reports tailored for various stakeholders, ultimately amplifying student voices to drive more effective decision-making. This includes a highly effective method for building a "truth directive" to add to qualitative analysis prompts. Together, these methods effectively eliminate hallucinations, maintaining stakeholder trust.

**Presenter(s):** Kirby Livingston;

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM

Early Engagement Indicators and Student Success: Multi-Campus Perspectives  
*Panel Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

Student engagement is a well-established predictor of success, yet campuses vary widely in how they track, analyze, and utilize engagement data, especially early indicators. Fragmented approaches often miss critical opportunities for timely support. This multi-campus panel explores how early engagement signals, captured during the critical transition into college (e.g., participation of orientation) and the first semester, can inform institutions with the time and insight needed to act earlier before challenges escalate. Presenters will showcase integrated practices that identify meaningful metrics, align data with institutional goals, and translate insights into actions. Attendees will gain practical frameworks for building sustainable, data-informed engagement systems that promote student success from day one.

**Presenter(s):** Xilin Zhang; Dantong (Amy) Yang; Jennifer Wu; Qingmin Shi;

IR as Code-First CollaboratR: Building an R-based Analytics Ecosystem  
*Panel Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

This interactive panel presents two case studies from IR offices implementing Posit Connect, a "code-first" platform for developing and securely sharing reproducible, custom analytics. Each panelist brings a distinct institutional perspective, offering participants concrete examples of challenges encountered, strategic solutions, and organizational changes involved in deploying this powerful, code-centric platform. Topics covered will include launching and scaling a new platform, ensuring secure access and data governance, upskilling IR staff, and managing both the technical and human components of digital transformation. The session emphasizes dialogue and practical takeaways: panelists will compare and contrast their experiences, invite audience questions, and share key lessons learned. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies and practical insights to support the advancement of their own institutional analytics ecosystems.

**Presenter(s):** Scott Barge; Lu Hao; Drew Allen; Inger Bergom;

Navigating Your Professional Development Through IR Organizations  
*Panel Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4) | Leadership & Career Development*

Navigating your professional development is an important part of your IR career. Organizations at the state, regional, and national levels can help support the development of your self and your office. From volunteering as a reviewer to serving as a Board Member, there is always a way to participate in these

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organizations. Learn how three individuals have benefited from their involvement in these organizations and their recommendations for younger IR professionals.

**Presenter(s):** Eric Godin; James Hunt; Braden Hosch;

Thinking About Consulting? Tips & Tales from the Trenches

*Panel Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Leadership & Career Development*

Moving from traditional employment to independent consulting represents a significant career pivot that requires planning, new skills, and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset. This panel brings together three seasoned IR/IE professionals who have made the shift to open full-time consulting practices. Drawing from real-world experiences, panelists will share candid perspectives on both the rewards and challenges of independent consulting. The discussion will cover key operational aspects of running a consulting practice including pricing, marketing, technology infrastructure, managing client expectations, and work-life balance challenges unique to solo practitioners. This session is designed for professionals contemplating the consulting transition, as well as recent independent consultants seeking to refine or advance their practice.

**Presenter(s):** Terra Schehr; Carolyn Mata; Jeremy Goodman;

11:10 AM - 11:30 AM

Collibra AI Governance demo: Turn AI ambition into AI value

*Sponsor Product Demonstration | Exhibit Hall Expo Theater - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Are your teams launching AI pilots faster than they can govern them? This product demo session explores how AI governance — built on visibility, traceability, and clear ownership — closes the adoption gap. Learn how end-to-end oversight across models, agents, and use cases enables responsible scale, embedded risk monitoring, and measurable AI business value.

See how you can: Gain full visibility and traceability across AI models, agents, and use cases; Embed governance by design with clear ownership and continuous risk oversight; Scale AI from pilots to production with accountability and measurable business value.

**Presenter(s):** Moiz Iqbal;

11:30 AM - 1:15 PM

Lunch break and poster presentations in the Networking Hub & Exhibit Hall (food for purchase)

*Exhibit Hall | Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Lunch Break*

Grab-and-go options for purchase will be in the Exhibit Hall on Wednesday, May 27, and Thursday, May 28. Be sure to visit sponsor booths while you're there!

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

An Introduction to Differential Item Functioning

*Poster Presentation | Poster 14 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

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This presentation will introduce the concept of differential item functioning (DIF), which is a statistical technique that is used to test for fairness in test items. The presentation will begin by discussing the statistical background of the technique. It will then provide participants with the SPSS syntax needed to conduct a DIF analysis. It will also include a discussion of a DIF study that was conducted on a second-year medical school exam. In the study, faculty revised questions that were previously identified as having DIF in order to determine if the revisions could eliminate the DIF without negatively affecting the other psychometric properties of the questions.

**Presenter(s):** Paul Sturgis;

Benchmarking Process: From Initiation to Implementation

*Poster Presentation | Poster 2 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This presentation will go over the end-to-end benchmarking project process and the steps we took to accomplish the project. It will go over how we took the needs of the leadership team and interpreted those needs into appropriate metrics that made an apples-to-apples comparison with other colleges. Beginning with pulling in IPEDS data, to ending up in a Power BI dashboard, we will discuss how we chose our peers and created three different peer groups, using both leadership experience and algorithmic tools, like Cosine Similarity and K-Means Clustering. The project has demonstrated value, allowing leadership to find the right questions to ask, and what colleges to look at when searching for answers. An attendee will be able to identify one or more of the steps from our process in their own benchmarking project and learn a general solution for each step.

**Presenter(s):** Jonathan Gallegos;

Credit Accumulation and Degree Completion: Evidence from Adult Learners

*Poster Presentation | Poster 20 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Decision Support*

This poster session, focused on online adult learners, showcases a study that examines whether credit accumulation is associated with degree completion among part-time adult learners at an online campus, while also exploring disparities across subpopulations and their intersectionality. Using propensity score methods to control for key covariates such as gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, and prior learning assessment credits, the study minimizes selection bias and strengthens causal inference. Findings will provide evidence-based insights for higher education stakeholders, policymakers, and administrators. By focusing on this often-overlooked population, the study expands the knowledge base on nontraditional and online learners and contributes to efforts aimed at promoting equity and improving degree completion outcomes.

**Presenter(s):** Siyu Liu; Tanya Cohen-Caldwell;

Enhancing Data Reporting with Programming, Visualization, and AI

*Poster Presentation | Poster 28 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Data reporting involves multiple processes, from preparation and integration to reporting and exploration. Ensuring accurate and timely data is essential for meaningful analysis, and programming skills, business intelligence tools, and AI assistance plays a vital role. Using IPEDS HR data as an example,

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this poster shows how these tools enhance reporting efficiency. It includes SQL and SAS code for data collection and integration, plus tips for building upload text files. Power BI highlights key data points and improves communication. AI assistance helps understanding IPEDS data usage, such as downloading datasets, identifying relevant tables, and preparing data for analysis.

**Presenter(s):** Zhiyuan Ma; Ying Liu;

#### Finding Synergy in Faculty Research Collaborations

*Poster Presentation | Poster 6 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

Faculty collaboration plays a critical role in advancing scholarly productivity and fostering interdisciplinary innovation. This poster explores patterns of faculty research collaboration using social network analysis on a dataset of approximately 4,000 documented partnerships. While the scale of the data presented challenges in identifying specific high-performing cliques, targeted analysis revealed key clusters of faculty with strong collaborative synergy. By leveraging computational tools—including AI-assisted clique detection—this study highlights the most productive research networks and offers insights into how institutions can support and replicate successful collaboration models. Attendees will gain an understanding of how network analysis can be applied to institutional research data to inform strategic planning and faculty development.

**Presenter(s):** Melinda Whitford;

#### FIRE & NSSE: What we know about engagement and speech on campus

*Poster Presentation | Poster 8 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Two pillars of the American civic faith of liberal democracy are the belief that we engage in a marketplace of ideas where the mettle of ideas are decided through argumentation, disagreement, and ultimately resolution, and that the institution of higher education can rely on its history of producing capable individual for the ranks of leaders, management, and entrepreneurs of tomorrow, in part through exposure to difficult ideas and different people. Yet the past decade has yielded a number of illiberal shoutdowns, riots, and ddisinvitations along with a widening gap in the political views of college graduates and the general American public. Drawing on data from FIRE and NSSE, this analysis examines the relationship between select facets of student engagement and perceptions of the (free) speech environment on campus.

**Presenter(s):** Brendan Dugan;

#### Institutional Trust among Undergraduates: Links with Campus Connectedness

*Poster Presentation | Poster 10 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Understanding students' feelings of trust versus mistrust toward institutions in which they are living and learning has important implications for institutional policies, procedures, and communications, as well as interactions and relationships between students and individuals seen as representatives of the institution (e.g., faculty, administrators, and other academic professionals). This poster presents the development and initial validation of a self-report measure of institutional trust for undergraduate students, examining the psychometric properties of the measure and associations with measures of campus connectedness using data collected via an undergraduate check-in study across three academic years at a selective US private university. This poster will be of interest to academic professionals

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interested in measurement development and the role of institutional trust in student engagement with institutions of higher education.

**Presenter(s):** Molly Weeks;

#### Politicized Confidence in Higher Education

*Poster Presentation | Poster 12 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

Public confidence in U.S. colleges and universities has declined sharply in recent years, with fewer than 1 in 3 Americans expressing strong confidence, and nearly as many expressing very little or none. Though there are likely many reasons underlying this trend, including the overall decline in trust in institutions, one emerging explanation is perceived political bias and growing ideological homogeneity within the academy. Drawing on nationally representative survey data from American adults, this presentation will demonstrate how perceptions of ideological bias consistently shape the amount of confidence many Americans have (or lack) in colleges and universities. As colleges and universities face challenges related to enrollment and increasing scarcity of funding, these findings shed light on how concerns about ideological bias may influence public confidence in higher education, and underscore the importance of addressing skepticism to rebuild confidence among a diverse public.

**Presenter(s):** Nathan Honeycutt;

#### Turning Student–AI Interactions into Accreditation-Ready Evidence

*Poster Presentation | Poster 26 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Accreditation and quality assurance (QA) often rely on outcome data such as grades and surveys. While useful, these measures give little insight into how students reason and decide. This poster presents a practical way to capture process evidence through AI-supported digital twin interactions in a Business Ethics course. Students co-constructed ethical decision trees with AI learning companions, while a comparison group received instructor-designed trees. Interaction data—dialogues and decision tree artifacts—were reviewed with three simple criteria: stakeholder inclusion, decision path clarity, and reasoning evidence. These became process indicators that can be integrated into Assurance of Learning (AoL) reports, accreditation documentation, and course improvement. The poster shows examples and a simple flow of how interaction data become accreditation-ready evidence. With generative AI rapidly expanding, this approach offers IR professionals timely new options for QA.

**Presenter(s):** YUNG-HSIANG HU;

#### Using R and PBI to Build an Interactive Student Success Model

*Poster Presentation | Poster 22 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Decision Support*

Institutional researchers support decision making by presenting data that improve student success and strengthen institutional effectiveness. Achieving student success requires both rigorous analysis and clear communication. This poster introduces an interactive model that integrates R for statistical analysis with Power BI (PBI) for dynamic visualization. Combining R's rigor with PBI's dashboards, the model visualizes regression results and lets users explore subgroups of interest. While PBI provides automated, customizable displays, it lacks advanced statistics such as correlation, regression, or ANOVA. Integrating R fills this gap, delivering robust analytics in an accessible platform. The poster will instruct participants

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on connecting R with PBI to conduct statistical analysis. It highlights five key areas—interactivity, visualization, specificity, automation, and analytics—that together foster evidence-based decision making, and improved outcomes for students and institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Xiaobing Cao;

What they see: An empathetic design approach to institutional effectiveness

*Poster Presentation | Poster 18 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

As institutional effectiveness professionals, we produce work that people use, and deal in a medium that can be seen as intimidating by those not acclimated to working with institutional data. This poster examines how we can improve our data tools and processes to be more inviting, intuitive and accessible by integrating the idea of "empathetic design" into our field. This design approach centers the end user and considers their needs and perspectives. We will discuss practical steps data professionals can take before, during, and after the design process to implement this approach when designing data dashboards, assessment processes, etc.

**Presenter(s):** Sean Morris;

Wisconsin's Talent Pipeline: Brain Drain or Brain Gain?

*Poster Presentation | Poster 4 - Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | Research & Policy*

To demonstrate its value as an engine for Wisconsin's economy, this study quantifies the University of Wisconsin System's contribution to the state workforce. Framed as a "brain drain" versus "brain gain" analysis, the research answers the critical question of whether the university successfully retains the skilled talent its state needs to thrive. Leveraging the 2024 National Alumni Career Mobility (NACM) Survey data, this research conducts a geo-demographic analysis to determine the percentage of recent graduates who work in-state versus out-of-state. The analysis creates distinct profiles of these two groups, comparing them across key variables such as academic major, industry, and salary to identify the drivers of talent retention and mobility. The findings will provide a powerful, evidence-based narrative of the university's return on public investment and its role as an engine for Wisconsin's economy.

**Presenter(s):** Ling Ning;

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Dessert break in the Networking Hub & Exhibit Hall

*Exhibit Hall | Exhibit Hall - Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2) | 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

Adding Social Network Analysis to Your IR Toolbox

*Affiliated Organization Best Presentation | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

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Traditional statistics like regression treat students as independent data points, missing the vital connections among students that define campus life. This session introduces Social Network Analysis to map the "hidden engine" of student engagement. We offer a new analytical lens to diagnose campus climate and provide senior leadership visual insights into whether the campus is integrated or segregated.

**Presenter(s):** Lynda Zhang;

AI-Powered Analytics to Transform Student Success: Predict, Intervene, Improve  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 12/13 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

AI-powered analytics are revolutionizing student success by turning data into timely, actionable support. This session introduces a multi-phase predictive process that begins before the semester and continues throughout, using pre-semester data such as academic preparation, financial aid, and registration patterns to identify top predictors of student success. During the term, biweekly updates incorporate live data from Learning Management Systems activity, course performance, and engagement signals, enabling advisors to act quickly. Beyond identifying priority students, we aggregate probability data at the program level to uncover collective risk trends, helping leaders allocate resources effectively. The session concludes with strategies for creating unbiased, explainable, and data-driven advising systems that achieve student success.

**Presenter(s):** Rishika Samala; Ram Marupudi; Gina Deom; Stefano Fiorini; Tradara Dane'e McLaurine;

Beyond Data Governance Frameworks: LSU Master Access Plan Implementation  
*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

Building on our 2025 AIR Forum data governance framework presentation, this session demonstrates the complete implementation of a comprehensive Master Access Plan - an operational system managing access across institutional data domains using a multi-tiered risk-based security framework. The session provides detailed implementation methodology, systematic approaches to documenting complex access procedures, and concrete metrics from deployment across diverse institutional environments. Attendees will receive practical implementation tools including comprehensive survey templates, risk-based security classification frameworks, standardized workflow templates, and complete planning structures. The presentation showcases operational methodologies, stakeholder engagement strategies, and scalable frameworks for institutions ready to move from governance theory to comprehensive, sustainable access management systems with measurable operational outcomes.

**Presenter(s):** Anna Bartel; Kristy Neal;

Common Data Set (CDS): Annual Update & How It's Used by Publishers  
*Speaker Session | Capitol/Congress Room (ML4) | Technology & Tools*

This session will provide the annual update on the Common Data Set (CDS) initiative. We will cover the final 2024-2025 CDS template revisions, review new or clarified definitions (especially those driven by recent IPEDS or regulatory changes), and present case studies on how CDS data is leveraged—or potentially misused—by the primary publishing partners (College Board, Peterson's, U.S. News & World Report) for high-stakes products like college rankings, student search, and data licensing. Institutional

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Research and data professionals rely on the CDS for efficient data reporting and to ensure the integrity of their institution's public profile. Attending this session is essential for proactively understanding compliance requirements, minimizing reporting burden, and safeguarding institutional data accuracy in critical, high-visibility contexts (like the U.S. News Best Colleges rankings).

**Presenter(s):** Kenneth Hines; Elise Miller McNeely;

Course Feedback Surveying With Teeth: Turning Survey Data Into Insights

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Student course feedback surveys are commonly used to evaluate teaching effectiveness and course quality, yet the resulting data often goes underutilized or misunderstood. In this session, we share a project conducted in partnership with the School of Dentistry that reimagined feedback as a catalyst for improvement. Through targeted survey design, dashboard development, and collaboration with academic leadership, we created a feedback system that not only visualized results, but directly supported curricular adjustments and faculty development. Attendees will see the entire lifecycle – from survey design to action planning – and leave with methods to implement similar systems at their institutions.

**Presenter(s):** William Warfel; Jessica Schmidt;

CPD: A Framework for Linking Student Information Systems and Program Data

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

This session explores how the Central Program Database (CPD) framework can be integrated with Student Information Systems (SIS) to extend institutional data capacity and support more impactful, equity-focused evaluation. Topics include the technical and ethical aspects of data integration, the design and data structures of CPD, and practical strategies for aligning SIS and program data to minimize shadow systems. Attendees will learn how CPD enables longitudinal and cross-program student tracking, strengthens compliance and reporting, and creates opportunities for more comprehensive evaluation of student outcomes. Through real-world examples, the session will demonstrate how CPD supports continuous improvement, enhances equity analyses, and informs data-driven decision-making. This session is essential for institutional research professionals, data architects, and program leaders seeking strategies to modernize data environments and maximize the value of both SIS and program data.

**Presenter(s):** Mervin Williams; Jeanette Kim;

Developing a Program Vitality Model

*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

Collin College developed a four-pillar program vitality model and associated dashboard to aid in ongoing programmatic assessment and financial planning. This session will cover the design process, core data sources, the analytics product, and client adoption plan. Attendees will gain a sense of how to carry out a multi-faceted review of programs at their institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Jeremy Anderson; Marina Kuryshin;

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Direct Admissions in Idaho: IPEDS Evidence on Access and Completion  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Research & Policy*

What happens when a state tells every qualified student: You already belong in college? This session explores Idaho's bold direct admissions policy and its impact on enrollment, retention, and completion over more than a decade. Using longitudinal IPEDS data, we analyze whether this access-driven reform produced lasting gains or simply shifted students across sectors. Findings highlight significant equity gains at two-year colleges and among historically underrepresented students, alongside limits when advising, aid transparency, and institutional capacity lagged. Attendees will engage with a custom IPEDS dashboard designed to make policy effects visible, learn how to leverage federal data for policy evaluation, and consider what conditions allow direct admissions to drive true attainment. Whether you are an institutional researcher seeking analytic tools or a policymaker weighing reform, this session connects data, policy, and practice to inform next steps.

**Presenter(s):** Jake Burns;

Does Timing Matter? Math Pathways and Retention  
*Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

This session examines whether the timing of math course completion influences student retention across distinct program pathways. Using a catalog-driven classification of seven pathways—including general education math, algebra, statistics, and discipline-specific calculus—we analyze when students complete required courses (by Year 1, Year 2, or later) and how these milestones align with one- and two-year retention. Attendees will learn a replicable method for mapping program-level requirements into pathways, coding completion timing, and linking these to student success outcomes. The session will highlight how such analyses can support advising, placement, and curricular decisions. Participants will leave with practical strategies to apply similar approaches at their institutions, helping them answer local questions about whether students are meeting math milestones on time or facing barriers that hinder persistence.

**Presenter(s):** Yihui Li; Franklin Zhou;

Doing More with Less: Decision Intelligence for Strategy & Enrollment  
*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

This paper shows how a small planning team applied decision intelligence to develop a five-year strategy under government-appointed oversight and capacity constraints. Using an enrollment planning framework (headcount, FTE, completions, and funding exposure), the team employed predictive analytics to stress-test financial and enrollment targets, while generative tools synthesized more than a decade of reports, risk registers, and directives into decision-ready insights. The result was a set of privacy-compliant dashboards and governance traceability packs that restored confidence in strategic targets while aligning with system-level frameworks. Participants will learn how to apply decision intelligence pipelines which combine predictive modeling, generative synthesis, and human-in-the-loop oversight to do more with less. Attendees will leave with a replicable playbook for building trust, efficiency, and resilience into strategy development in resource-constrained contexts.

**Presenter(s):** Liile Lekena-Bayaga;

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## Elevate Your AI Game: Applying a Structured Prompting Framework in Higher Education

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 3 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

What if AI became more than a quick-answer tool and instead a reliable partner for producing high quality, repeatable outcomes? While more and more people are experimenting with AI, most remain at the first basic level of prompting. This session introduces a structured prompting framework tailored for higher education professionals to help them move to the next level. Participants will learn how to shift from short, simple prompts that generate unpredictable results to structured prompts that provide consistency, clarity, and efficiency across recurring tasks. Examples span institutional research tasks and broader higher education research. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, reusable templates, and a deeper understanding of how structured prompting can improve their daily work. The ideas shared in this session can also guide participants in building their own prompt playbook tailored to their office tasks.

**Presenter(s):** Sarah Gallimore; Mary Rosene; Ruyu Yan;

## From Dashboards to Dialogue: AI-Assisted Storytelling for IR

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 2 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Static dashboards and reports often fail to drive institutional action despite containing valuable insights. This interactive session demonstrates how AI can transform IR professionals from data presenters into institutional storytellers who craft compelling narratives that resonate with diverse stakeholders. Learn AI techniques for converting complex analytics into plain-language insights, develop audience-specific storytelling strategies, and create hybrid outputs combining visuals with AI-generated narratives. Through live demonstrations and hands-on practice, participants will master prompt strategies for leadership briefings, faculty communications, and student-facing reports while addressing risks of oversimplification and bias. Leave with ready-to-use templates for survey reports, accreditation updates, and executive dashboards that turn analytics into actionable institutional dialogue.

**Presenter(s):** Juhi Chadha;

## Institutional Characteristics Behind Enrollment Shifts

*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

Public federal datasets like IPEDS can provide insights into the evolving higher education landscape. With mentorship from the NCES Data Institute, we analyzed IPEDS enrollment data to (1) quantify the extent of enrollment decline vs. enrollment growth at 4-year institutions from 2019 to 2023 and (2) identify patterns in admissions, cost of attendance, and student composition associated with changing enrollment rate. Thirty percent of U.S. 4-year institutions declined over 10% in first-time in college enrollment from 2019–2023; yet, public institutions with larger initial enrollment, access-oriented admissions, and greater recruitment of underrepresented students saw growth. Institutional strategies like expanding access and targeted recruitment may offer promising responses to a shifting demographic landscape. Attendees will learn about differences across institutions in recent 4-year enrollment trends and the process of applying public datasets in institutional research.

**Presenter(s):** Kurt Williams; Amleset Abrhale;

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## Leniency and Reliability- Faculty Grading Behaviors in the Pandemic Era

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Research & Policy*

This session will examine faculty grading styles during the implementation of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) policies amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on Millet's (2018) methodology to quantify grading reliability and leniency, we use institutional data that distinguish between instructor-assigned grades and final posted grades affected by pandemic-era policies. One policy in particular is the transition to what have been perceived as more student-favored grading policies like S/U. We will specifically focus on two questions: -How did the transition to an S/U policy impact grading leniency and reliability at the individual instructor level? -How did grading styles change during the S/U policy period? The results of our analysis shed some light on faculty grading practices and how institutional policy may impact how faculty approach grading. The objective of the session is to open a dialog about grading practices and the impact of institutional policy on those grading practices.

**Presenter(s):** Celeste Calkins; John (Skip) Crooker; Qingmin Shi;

## Leveraging LMS Data to Enhance Academic Advising and Early Alert Systems

*Speaker Session | Catholic University/University of DC Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

Student success in gateway math courses is a strong predictor of persistence and degree completion. At our institution, we piloted an initiative that extracts data from the Canvas learning management system (LMS) to be used for both descriptive reporting and predictive models. Using variables such as assignment submissions, quiz performance, and patterns of LMS engagement, the model generates risk indicators that are shared with advisors through a streamlined early-alert process. This allows advisors and student support staff to identify students that may not be on track to pass gateway courses and refer students to support services such as tutoring or academic coaching. Attendees will leave with a practical roadmap for exploring LMS-based data and connecting predictive models to advising practices, as well as lessons learned from piloting this approach in high-impact gateway courses.

**Presenter(s):** Diana Lomelin; Matthew Hoolsema;

## Predicting Retention Using Multinomial Logistic Regression in R

*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Technology & Tools*

Most retention studies focus on a binary outcome—retain or not—over a limited timeframe. This binary ignores two critical pathways: transfer and early graduation. This study uses multinomial logistic regression in R to model undergraduates' probabilities of enrolling, not enrolling, transferring, or graduating across six academic years at a large public four-year university. Predictors include student background (ACT/SAT scores, high school GPA, gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation), financial factors (unmet need, cost of attendance, Pell eligibility, etc.), academic progress (course drops, withdrawals, failures, and course non-success rate), and census variables. Findings can inform institutional collaboration (e.g., academic support, residential life, budget, etc.) to identify at-risk students for early interventions, anticipate budgetary needs, and target high-risk courses. This study contributes methodological innovation and practical strategies for student success.

**Presenter(s):** Shiya Liu;

Test-Optional Math Placement: Data-Driven Insights for Student Success  
*Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

As more institutions adopt test-optional admissions policies, the challenge of accurately placing students into appropriate math courses becomes increasingly important. Columbus State University analyzed the effectiveness of different math placement methods—including high school GPA, standardized test scores, and placement exams—on predicting student success, defined as earning a grade of C or better in core math classes. This session will share findings on success rates across placement approaches, explore equity implications, and discuss strategies for aligning placement policies with test-optional admissions practices. Participants will gain practical insights into using institutional data to improve math placement accuracy and support student success.

**Presenter(s):** William Muse;

Who's working and how many hours: A 10-year analysis of working students  
*Speaker Session | Shaw/LeDroit Park Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

More students are working today compared to 10 years ago and students who are working are working more hours than in the past. This session will highlight research conducted by the University System of Georgia to better understand the relationship between work, cost of attendance, and student course loads. Researchers analyzed more than 4.9 million student records and analyzed working patterns from 2013 to 2023. Researchers will share their findings from this comprehensive look at working students including findings that students who worked full-time or more tended to be older, female, Black, or Hispanic as compared to students who did not work or worked 20 or fewer hours per week. Researchers in this session will explain how they used new machine learning approaches for causal inference and data from 26 colleges and universities, Unemployment Insurance wage data, and financial aid data to better understand the impact of work on students.

**Presenter(s):** David Tanner; Scott King; Ethan Christmas; Patrick Harris;

Workforce Composition and Compensation in Institutional Research  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 4 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

2025 Employee Retention Survey (ERS), this session benchmarks institutional research (IR) against other departments and 2023 results, covers key predictors of retention (job satisfaction/belonging, flexibility, workload, and pay perceptions), examines misalignment between preferred and actual work arrangements and the role of supervisor supports, and translates the data into practical, measurable strategies and metrics. Attendees will be able to identify higher-risk segments in their IR workforce, select 2–3 targeted interventions suited to their context, and outline a simple monitoring plan with clear metrics and cadence.

**Presenter(s):** Jennifer Schneider;

2:30 PM - 4:15 PM

Yes, And: Becoming a Better Data Communicator through Improv  
*Speaker Session | Archives Room (ML4) | Leadership & Career Development*

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Whether being questioned by an audience at our organization or getting a curveball from a colleague, data professionals must be ready to deal with the unexpected. This participatory session explores how principles of improvisation can help IR practitioners build resilience, respond effectively in the moment, and reframe the unexpected as opportunities. Participants will apply improv techniques to tackle unexpected situations based on real-life IR/IE stories. It doesn't matter if you are an introvert or extravert, as long as you come with an open mind. Together, we will practice techniques that foster confidence in communication and stronger connections with stakeholders.

**Presenter(s):** Jeremy Goodman; Kelli Van Wasshenova;

3:30 PM - 4:15 PM

Beyond Simple Comparisons: Evaluating Student Success with IPTW Dashboards  
*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Decision Support*

Student success programs often show promising outcomes, but how much is due to the program versus who chooses to participate? This session demonstrates how inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW), a propensity score-based method, addresses selection bias in program evaluation by reweighting samples to create balanced comparison groups while retaining full datasets. Using examples from a Math Readiness Program, participants will see how IPTW provides more credible estimates of program impact. The session emphasizes practical implementation, including diagnostic checks for validity and Tableau dashboards that make complex adjustments transparent to stakeholders. Participants will gain frameworks for applying these methods to their own evaluations, moving beyond descriptive comparisons to causal inference that withstands scrutiny and informs strategic decisions.

**Presenter(s):** Osundwa Wanjera;

Catalysts for Change: Advancing IR's Strategic Role in ERP Implementation  
*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementations, such as Banner and Workday, are often viewed as technical projects, but they can be catalysts for so much more. These transitions can redefine institutional processes, shift data cultures, and even reshape organizational roles. In this session, two institutional research professionals will share their unique experiences from opposite ends of the ERP change timeline: One served as a key stakeholder in the preparation and planning stages of a Banner implementation for 6 distinct institutions within a university system, navigating change management, data cleanup, and cross-campus collaboration before go-live. The other stepped into a newly created IR/data strategy role that emerged post-Workday implementation, designed to meet the institution's growing demand for integrated analytics, governance structures, and a data-informed culture.

**Presenter(s):** Eric Atchison; Tara Webb;

Data Reporting: Balancing Accreditation Requirements with Student Privacy  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 1 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Under regional accreditation standards (e.g., WASC CFR 4.2 or NWCCU 1.D.2), institutions must collect, analyze, and act on disaggregated student outcomes data, including retention and graduation rates, that

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are broken out by socioeconomic and demographic attributes. Instead of sharing student-level identifiers with third parties to collect socio-demographic and economic student background data, this presentation shows “hands-on” how to use a broad range of public geospatial data (over 200 indicators) as proxy measures to obviate the risk of breaching student privacy through data-sharing with outside entities. Student-level inference estimation is based on triangulation of a vast range of socioeconomic and demographic data at the lowest geospatial level (census block/tract). To capture student diversity, geospatial data are intersected interactively online with student data to measure the relationship descriptively, through correlation analysis, and with causal inference estimation.

**Presenter(s):** Serge Herzog; John Stanley; Christi Palacat;

[From Numbers to Narratives: Data Literacy for Non-Technical Audiences](#)

*Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

How can Institutional Research make data meaningful for non-technical audiences? This session showcases how the University of La Verne developed an Institutional Factbook in Power BI to strengthen data literacy across campus. Topics include cleaning Banner data in SQL for consistency, designing Factbooks on demographics, enrollment, degrees, classifications, and retention/graduation, and simplifying dashboards to reduce barriers for non-technical users. Attendees will see how design choices—such as minimizing dropdowns and presenting clear visuals—helped deans, program directors, and accreditation committees use data confidently in planning and self-studies.

**Presenter(s):** Tejshree Trivedi;

[From Request to Root Cause: A BI Case Study in Process Improvement](#)

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

This session presents a case study in which a request to automate a graduate waiver process revealed deeper organizational misalignments and inefficiencies. Attendees will explore how business intelligence professionals can lead institutional transformation by engaging stakeholders, mapping processes, and uncovering root causes—rather than simply addressing surface-level symptoms. The session will detail how the team identified the true process owners, navigated cross-functional dynamics, and ultimately developed a Power Platform solution to standardize, digitize, and optimize the workflow. Emphasis will be placed on the strategic role of BI in diagnosing institutional challenges, aligning technology with operational needs, and delivering scalable, cost-effective solutions. This session is ideal for professionals interested in process improvement, stakeholder alignment, and the broader impact of BI in higher education.

**Presenter(s):** Brianna Reddick;

[Investigating Undergraduate High Risk Course Combinations](#)

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Decision Support*

This session introduces a data-driven approach to identifying “high-risk” undergraduate course combinations/pairings in which students consistently earn lower-than-expected grades. Based on statistical analysis of nearly 100,000 student records across four semesters, the presentation demonstrates how institutional analytics can uncover hidden academic barriers. Attendees will explore a methodology that shifts focus from individual courses to concurrent enrollment patterns, offering

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actionable insights for advising, curriculum design, and policy. The session also outlines the work of a cross-campus group examining registration practices and recommending changes to advising strategies. Participants will gain a clear understanding of both the analytic techniques and their practical applications.

**Presenter(s):** Erika Ruffin; Becky Patterson; Steve Fry;

Listening Session: Updating the CIP-SOC Crosswalk  
*Roundtable | Capitol Hill Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

Participate in a Listening Session to inform and contribute your insights to a project focused on augmenting the CIP-SOC crosswalk.

**Presenter(s):** Christopher M. Mullin; Tucker Plumlee; Merab Hagos; Marty Romitti;

Meet Iris: A Secure AI Assistant for IR Data and Knowledge Management  
*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

Institutional Research (IR) professionals often spend valuable time navigating fragmented documentation and inconsistent definitions across departments. This session introduces Iris—a secure, home-grown AI data assistant designed specifically for IR knowledge management and documentation. Built with local deployment and data governance in mind, Iris reduces information search time, improves documentation consistency, and strengthens cross-department collaboration. Attendees will learn how our team built Iris to preserve institutional knowledge, provide consistent definitions, and streamline reporting workflows. We will share lessons learned, measurable outcomes, and a practical framework for adopting similar approaches in other institutions. Participants will leave with concrete strategies to enhance efficiency, documentation quality, and knowledge sharing within their own IR offices.

**Presenter(s):** Xilin Zhang;

Program Reviews in Review: Application of Comprehensive Viability Measures  
*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Academic program reviews are crucial to understanding program performance and sustainability. Program reviews are used to support data-informed decision-making processes and can impact the distribution of resources and the future of the program. One community college found that student data and expense reports were not enough to fully inform stakeholders tasked with determining program efficacy. This problem was addressed through development of program viability measures: a set of measures designed to address program stability, performance, and institutional context through readily available campus data. The addition of these measures to create a more comprehensive data package for program reviews was well-received by stakeholders, and the college intends to expand the use of these measures beyond the program review cycle. This session will review the program viability measures and their interpretation and application within a community college academic program review.

**Presenter(s):** Alison Preston;

Solving the Equation: Rethinking Online Math Success at Community Colleges  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

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Community college students often face unique barriers in online mathematics courses, leading to lower completion and persistence compared to in-person formats. This session draws on a qualitative case study at Delaware County Community College, where student interviews highlighted supports and barriers in online math. Flexible recorded lectures, adaptive tools, and responsive instructors aided persistence, while limited peer interaction, inconsistent tutoring, technical challenges, and family responsibilities hindered progress. A distinctive feature of this research is the use of AI-assisted transcript analysis, which enabled synthesis of large volumes of interview data into actionable themes. Attendees will gain evidence-based strategies to redesign online math courses and supports, while also learning how AI can enhance qualitative research. Though grounded in a community college, findings are relevant to the first two years of higher education where gateway math is stumbling block.

**Presenter(s):** Wenjun Chi; Janet Ping;

*Sponsored Research Productivity: Evaluation and Metrics  
Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

Sponsored research is an integral part of higher education. As the landscape of sponsored research changes, particularly impacted by changes from federal sponsors, we are reevaluating how we measure research productivity as well as integrating success metrics into strategic initiatives. This presentation reviews sponsored research and metric development at the University of North Carolina System Office, a system of 16 public universities in NC that enrolls over 250k students. The UNC System has more than \$2.2 billion in research expenditures and campuses that serve every region of North Carolina from small, baccalaureate institutions to large, R1 institutions. One of the 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 and proposed metrics and related policies will be presented.

**Presenter(s):** Giana Malak;

*Strategic Storytelling with Data: Inside the UA Data Communications Toolkit  
Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Data alone doesn't drive change, but how we communicate it can. This session explores how higher education professionals can turn institutional data into compelling, audience-focused narratives that inform decision-making, enhance engagement, and support data literacy. Attendees will learn practical frameworks and tools (the UAIR Design System, branded communication templates, and real-world infographic examples) that bridge the gap between data insight and campus understanding. We'll also examine the emerging role of AI in crafting effective messaging. Whether you're in institutional research, communications, or administration, you'll leave with strategies to elevate your data storytelling and tailor your message to your specific campus data culture. This session empowers attendees to make data communication a purposeful, impactful practice when supporting campus-wide decision-making.

**Presenter(s):** Fallon Murphy;

*The Power of Connection: Data Integration as a Catalyst for Student Success  
Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

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Bowling Green State University is demonstrating how the power of connection across data, systems, and people can strengthen student success. By integrating information from sources such as the learning management system, early alerts, student organizations, athletic events, meal swipes, and community service, BGSU developed a unified 0–3 engagement scale to measure levels of involvement. This connected approach breaks down silos, improves data literacy, and provides actionable insights that help campus partners deliver timely and targeted support. Analysis of these data sets reveals a clear relationship between engagement, retention, and academic achievement. By transforming fragmented data into a cohesive understanding of student behavior, BGSU has created a model for how collaboration and integration can drive meaningful institutional change and improve student outcomes.

**Presenter(s):** Kimberlyn Brooks;

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

California Association for Institutional Research

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine)*

Come and network with colleagues from the California Association for Institutional Research! We will provide updates on the annual conference, discuss current topics of interest, and opportunities to get involved.

**Presenter(s):** Pamela Ong; Michael Le;

CIRPA Affiliated Organization Meet-up

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2)*

Canadian attendees and friends: Come join us for an informal meet and greet to network with fellow professionals in the field. Following the brief gathering, we can all go for dinner nearby. It will be a wonderful chance to unwind, continue conversations, and foster new connections in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

**Presenter(s):** Miranda Pearson;

Indiana Association for Institutional Research (INAIR) Gathering

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Union Station Room (ML3)*

Indiana AIR (INAIR) will gather to meet with each other and get updates from the board, including a recap of our 2026 conference this past spring and plans for next year's Annual Conference! We welcome all AIR Forum attendees from Indiana and neighboring states as well!

**Presenter(s):** Adrea Hernandez;

MI/AIR Affiliated Organization Meeting

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Judiciary Square Room (ML3)*

Join MI/AIR board members and colleagues from across Michigan to network and hear updates on MI/AIR, including the November regional conference and recognition of the 2026 Best Paper Award recipient.

**Presenter(s):** Erin Sonneveldt; Shane Redman; Jala Daniel;

OAIRP Meet-up (Ohio Association of Institutional Research & Planning)

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Tulip Room (Mezzanine)*

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Meet-up with other Ohio members to compare best practices concerning state-level reporting and cooperation.

**Presenter(s):** Dalen Foster;

OCAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine)*

**Presenter(s):** Linli Zhou; Jennifer Wu;

PNAIRP Affiliated Organization Meeting

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2)*

PNAIRP Meet-Up Come meet your fellow Higher Education Researchers from the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia, and Rocky Mountain regions.

**Presenter(s):** Allyson Meyers;

TAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine)*

Networking opportunity for anyone interested in Texas IR topics.

**Presenter(s):** Morgan Carter;

TENNAIR Affiliated Organization Meeting (State)

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine)*

Connect with colleagues from the state of Tennessee.

**Presenter(s):** Derrick Dupuis;

Virginia Association for Institutional Research (VAIR)

*Affiliated Organization Meeting | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) |*

Please join other colleagues from Virginia for a time to network and hear updates from the VAIR Board.

**Presenter(s):** Chris Orem;

# Friday, May 29, 2026

8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

## Beyond the Bot: Designing AI Agents for Institutional Research

*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

This session explores the iterative development of Copilot agents in the Microsoft Copilot Studio to support institutional research workflows. We will share lessons learned from our initial attempt to automate the data request intake process—highlighting challenges in agent design and logic—and how those insights led to a second agent designed to answer questions from our data documentation library. Attendees will gain practical strategies for designing AI agents that align with institutional needs and technical capabilities.

**Presenter(s):** Zun Tang; Elizabeth Rosalen;

## Boosting Survey Responses: A Collaborative Approach

*Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Low response rates continue to challenge the effectiveness of survey research in academic institutions. While general strategies for improving participation exist, tailored approaches that consider institutional context and respondent characteristics may yield better results. This session explores an innovative approach to response rate issues, with an emphasis on broadening collaboration across units, leveraging different perspectives to uncover hidden barriers, and analyzing survey metadata to inform procedural changes. Attendees will gain insight in how to attempt similar approaches at their own institutions for improving survey engagement.

**Presenter(s):** Joseph Ludlum; Diley Hernández;

## Creating a Self-Service Dashboard in R

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Technology & Tools*

Institutional researchers are often tasked with providing data to various constituents on an ad hoc basis. To streamline our efforts and alleviate time pressure and competition with other projects, we developed a dashboard tool using R and Shiny that constituents could use to generate their requested data themselves. In this presentation, we will demonstrate the features and functionality of Shiny, articulate why we chose Shiny over other dashboard tools, and showcase the new dashboard.

**Presenter(s):** Marianne Bujacich;

## Decentralized Institutional Research Through the Lens of Branch Campuses

*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

The international branch campuses (IBCs) of US universities offer a window into pronounced institutional decentralization, enrolling students and offering degrees thousands of miles away from decision-makers at their home campuses. Beyond mere differences in space and time zone, IBCs also have unique data

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analytics and reporting needs to sustain operations in their host country. Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar and Georgetown University in Qatar have taken two different approaches to meeting those branch-specific needs. By discussing the data needs of international and domestic branch campus as semi-autonomous parts of a university and the institutional research strategies used to meet those needs, this session will shine a light on both decentralization of the institutional research function and the complex dynamics that IR leaders need to navigate around a growing multiversity.

**Presenter(s):** Malak Alseaf; Trent Kennedy;

*Empathy to Evidence: Advancing Advising Insights for Student Success*  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Why do so many students leave community colleges within their first two years, and how can advising help change that story? This session shares findings from a mixed-methods study conducted at Delaware County Community College, which investigated advising as a key lever for student success. Using staff empathy interviews, stop-out student interviews, advisor perspectives, a survey of current students, and policy analysis, the research team uncovered systemic barriers and opportunities in advising that directly shape persistence and equity outcomes. Attendees will learn how to integrate empathy-driven methods with institutional evidence to generate actionable insights for strengthening advising systems. While rooted in a community college context, the findings are relevant to the first two years at four-year institutions, where attrition risks are similarly concentrated. Participants will leave with strategies and recommendations to inform advising reform and improve student retention.

**Presenter(s):** Wenjun Chi; Janet Ping;

*First Time at Forum: Next Steps*  
*Discussion Group | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Leadership & Career Development*

First Time at Forum: Next Steps is a facilitated reflection session for first-time attendees at the close of the AIR Forum. Participants will have the opportunity to pause, reflect on key themes and takeaways from the conference, and discuss what resonated most from sessions, conversations, and experiences. The session will also help attendees identify practical next steps—whether applying new ideas at their institution, continuing conversations with peers, or finding ways to stay engaged with the AIR community—so they leave AIR Forum feeling grounded, confident, and ready to act.

**Presenter(s):** Jennifer Chu;

*Frontend Web Apps for IR*  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Technology & Tools*

Frontend web apps can serve as lightweight alternatives to BI dashboards or apps built with specialized runtimes like RShiny. Compared to BI tools like Tableau and PowerBI, they offer the advantages of being fully reproducible and customizable and more amenable to automated and AI-assisted workflows. In contrast to RShiny, frontend web apps can run entirely in the browser without needing the overhead of specialized server infrastructure. In this presentation, I will share some different options for producing interactive, browser-based reports using data science notebook environments familiar to many institutional researchers. The options presented here are organized according to the level of interactivity

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possible and the extent to which JavaScript is required. Some of the options discussed include: R and Quarto, Observable Framework, and marimo Python. The session concludes with a demonstration of how to deploy these apps securely using GitHub Pages on GitHub Enterprise Cloud.

**Presenter(s):** Alex McClung;

#### How to Prevent Data Anarchy During a Workday ERP Implementation

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

This session will share lessons learned from a campus-wide Workday ERP transition for HR and Finance. We will discuss the stages of the implementation, highlighting how project tasks were divided into individual “workstreams” that sometimes fostered siloing and hindered collaboration. We will also explore the evolving and often uncertain understanding of team member's roles, both within the institution and with external consultants, and the challenges that arose from that ambiguity. Nearly every attendee will participate in an ERP transition at some point in their careers, and the risks to data quality and governance during this period are high. Participants will leave with practical insights into how ERP systems are implemented, strategies for ensuring key campus stakeholders contribute effectively, and tools to maintain data integrity and governance in times of institutional change.

**Presenter(s):** Preston Bennett;

#### Leading the Data Revolution: A Blueprint for Data-driven Success at CUNY

*Speaker Session | Silver Linden Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

At the City University of New York, the nation’s largest public urban university system, building and supporting data culture and infrastructure that arms decision makers with the needed data and analytics upon which to make sound strategic and programmatic decisions is no easy feat. It requires a comprehensive data and reporting office and requires a robust, secure, and sustainable data system that allows for broad longitudinal student tracking without compromising student confidentiality. In this session, we will describe how the Office of Applied Research, Evaluation, and Data Analytics brings to the forefront program, policy, and institutional research, as well as data management, infrastructure, and institutional reporting as requisite functions for building data culture and for solving complex problems being tackled by the University. We will also present our Central Program Database (CPD) framework and its role in enhancing data literacy and evidence-based decision-making.

**Presenter(s):** Colin Chellman; Mervin Williams; Jeanette Kim;

#### Making Student Parents Visible: Data Collection, Policy, and Outcomes

*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Student parents are a substantial but often hidden population—making up about 1 in 5 undergraduates nationally—whose success influences enrollment, transfer, and completion outcomes. States are increasingly passing mandates for colleges to track students' parenting status, yet practices are inconsistent. This session will show how stronger data collection can unlock new insights: first, by enabling institutions to identify and describe student parents and design supports that meet their needs; and second, by connecting those data to transfer and degree outcomes. Drawing on two new studies, presenters will share actionable strategies for collecting student-parent data and highlight national

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evidence on transfer and bachelor's completion. Participants will learn how to align institutional practices with policy requirements and leverage the power of data to both understand and improve student trajectories.

**Presenter(s):** Theresa Anderson; Afet Dundar; Paul Peterson;

### Measuring Dashboard Utilization to Improve Decision-Making

*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Dashboards are only valuable when they are actively used to inform decisions. This session explores how higher education institutions can measure dashboard utilization, identify reports that are underused, and take targeted actions- such as refining, retiring, or promoting dashboards- to increase adoption and maximize impact.

Participants will learn practical strategies for tracking engagement metrics, interpreting usage patterns, and applying insights to improve dashboard design and relevance. By focusing on actionable approaches to evaluate and enhance dashboard performance, this session equips attendees with ideas to ensure their analytics deliver real value to decision-makers, support evidence-based choices, and drive meaningful outcomes across the institution.

**Presenter(s):** Santhana Lakshmi Ponnurasan; Andrew Sommer;

### Survey Insights about Students' Freedom of Expression and Responsibility

*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Decision Support*

This session will describe Davidson College's recent effort to understand students' views on freedom of expression and personal and social responsibility. In light of the increasing political tensions across higher education, Davidson College convened a cross-campus working group composed of representatives from institutional effectiveness, student life, diversity and inclusion, and faculty to develop a student survey assessing the campus climate. Conducted in Spring 2025 with a 20% response rate, the campus-wide student survey contained newly developed items related to Freedom of Expression as well as previously established items from the discontinued Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRI) survey. Findings revealed meaningful differences between students that are relevant for other institutions. During the session, we will share an overview of the survey administration, key results, and how we have leveraged these results to inform campus-wide conversations.

**Presenter(s):** Thomas Kirnbauer; Brent Maher;

### Using AI for Survey Research: Imagining IR's Future

*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

How can IR offices use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve their survey research process? Participants of this discussion group will have the opportunity to learn from one another as well as hear from one large-scale survey research project, the National Survey of Student Engagement, about its exploratory work with AI. A sample of the topics to be covered includes using large language models for writing and reviewing survey questions and harnessing machine learning algorithms to maximize response rates and

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survey item completion. Participants should leave this session with several ideas for harnessing AI with their own survey projects.

**Presenter(s):** Shimon Sarraf; Bob Gonyea; Malik M. Wali Awan;

9:00 AM - 9:45 AM

*Closing the Loop on High-Impact Practices: Redesigning a Senior Exit Survey*  
*Speaker Session | Judiciary Square Room (ML3) | Assessment & Evaluation*

How do you turn departmental knowledge about High-Impact Practices (HIPs) into better survey measurement and actionable insights? IR/Assessment and Experiential Education partners share how interviews with academic departments yielded a campus-specific HIPs taxonomy that directly informed a Senior Exit Survey redesign embedded in the graduation application. We'll show before/after items, highlight changes in HIP reporting and response patterns (including higher response among HIP-engaged students), and outline how we returned results to departments through concise one-pagers, prompts for faculty discussions, and an annual update cadence. You'll leave with adaptable templates: a HIPs taxonomy starter, item-writing patterns, an analysis checklist for pre/post comparisons, and a one-page "closing-the-loop" format. Whether you're tuning a legacy instrument or building one from scratch, this session offers a practical path from conversations → constructs → better data → improvement.

**Presenter(s):** Marissa Green-Francescon; Jennifer Noyce;

*Crimson Catalog: Turning Data Chaos into Clarity*  
*Speaker Session | Scarlet Oak Room (Mezzanine) | Decision Support*

Indiana University is launching Crimson Catalog, a multi-phase initiative to improve data findability and reduce duplication of reporting across seven campuses, two centers, and the School of Medicine. Too often, decision-makers encounter conflicting reports, unclear definitions, and redundant dashboards, leading to inefficiencies and misinterpretation.

This session will share IU's phased approach to building a curated catalog of high-value reports, beginning with budget model inputs, Human Resources, Enrollment, and Degrees. Using shared taxonomies, Denodo-based data views, Tableau reports, and consistent definitions in the Data Cookbook, IU is building reliable, transparent, and scalable data resources. Presenters will share governance structures, stakeholder engagement strategies, and lessons learned from early phases. Participants will leave with a practical model for improving decision-making, efficiency, and trust in institutional data.

**Presenter(s):** Gina Deom; Bridgett Milner;

*Data-Informed Advocacy in Higher Education: Turning Numbers into Narratives*  
*Speaker Session | George Washington University Room (ML1)*

Colleges face heightened scrutiny on affordability, value, and outcomes. This session equips institutional researchers and effectiveness professionals with practical strategies to turn complex datasets into clear, compelling advocacy tools. Drawing on lessons from work with multiple state associations, the session outlines three core principles of data-informed advocacy: (1) know your audience, (2) start with "why,"

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and (3) focus only on data that add clarity and impact. How do we framing data points into narratives that resonate with policymakers, community leaders, and trustees.

**Presenter(s):** Carolyn Mata;

Degrees Beyond the Degree: Modeling Post-Bachelor's Grad School Attendance  
*Speaker Session | Magnolia Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Which students are most likely to attend graduate school - and how can we use that insight to improve advising, outreach, and support? This session presents a case study using logistic regression to identify characteristics associated with graduate school attendance after earning a bachelor's degree. We'll explore the variables that matter most, how we validated the model, and how the results were shared with academic leadership and advising teams. Attendees will leave with ideas for replicating the analysis and applying insights to support students' long-term academic goals.

**Presenter(s):** Jessica Schmidt;

Designing Dashboards That Stick: Power BI Tips, Tricks, and Pitfalls  
*Speaker Session | Georgetown University Room (ML1) | Technology & Tools*

Power BI dashboards are now central to how institutions communicate data, yet many IR professionals struggle with issues of design, usability, and adoption. This session shares practical strategies and lessons learned from building both internal and public dashboards at a large public university. Participants will explore the full development process, from structuring datasets and models for accuracy, to applying visualization techniques such as dynamic titles, hierarchy slicers, and bookmarks, to deploying dashboards that protect data while encouraging stakeholder trust. Special attention will be given to strategies for securing buy-in and ensuring sustainable adoption across campus. Attendees will leave with concrete skills, a clear framework for balancing technical and organizational needs, and a reusable Power BI template they can adapt to accelerate development at their own institutions.

**Presenter(s):** Lisa Applegate; Simona Mitevaska;

Developing a Comprehensive Community College Student Success Metric  
*Speaker Session | Tulip Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Community colleges serve diverse populations of students, including part-time and full-time, adult and traditional age, and credit and noncredit. Yet, despite this, success metrics like graduation and transfer rates have focused only on select students, such as those who are full-time, first time in college, or those who earn awards. In this session, we will describe Dallas College's efforts to develop a more comprehensive student success metric that encompasses the full range of student types and functions that it and other community colleges serve. We will describe how we joined the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's Survey of Community College Outcomes as a pilot participant for Texas, using its student success rate—which counts awards, transfer, and persistence as successful outcomes—to inform our own approach. We will discuss how other community colleges can better tell the stories of how their students achieve success in myriad ways by adopting or developing similar metrics.

**Presenter(s):** McKenna Griffin; Dillon Lu; Olivia Pietrzak;

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## Early Behaviors as Predictors of First-Year Outcomes

*Speaker Session | Dogwood Room (Mezzanine) | Assessment & Evaluation*

This session explores how simple behaviors that occur prior to a student setting foot in a classroom—like delayed survey completion or late course registration—can serve as early warning signs for adverse outcomes among first-time, first-year students. Drawing on institutional data, we'll share findings from an initial analysis that linked these behaviors to lower retention and GPA, how targeted follow-up in Fall 2024 led to modest but meaningful improvements and development of, and preliminary results from an intervention in Fall 2025. Attendees will gain practical insights into identifying at-risk students using early behavioral indicators from existing data systems and learn how to design and evaluate interventions that make a difference. This session offers institutional researchers, advisors, and student success offices, actionable strategies to help students start strong and stay on track.

**Presenter(s):** Sarah Blackstone; Chris Orem;

## Metrics Mission Control: Building a Strategic Plan Tracking Dashboard

*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 14 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Strategic plan implementation is a shared responsibility among staff and faculty at colleges and universities, but information about how the plan is progressing is not always easily accessible. At the College of Southern Maryland, the department of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Research has collaborated across the college to create a Power BI dashboard that shows the progression of seven different strategic plan metrics and provides the ability to look closely and disaggregate the data behind the metrics. Public-facing and internal versions of the dashboard make this data readily available to members of the community, students, and employees. In this presentation, we will outline this collaborative process, discussing the contributions of various stakeholders and the challenges we faced. We will share the initial and finished products and our tips for creating a strategic plan metrics tracker that is accessible and useful.

**Presenter(s):** Tracy Bacon; Brandon Nzekwe;

## Strategic planning for data readiness: governance, centralization & utility

*Speaker Session | Cherry Blossom Room (Mezzanine) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Let's imagine an information utopia. Data is consistently defined. Access is straightforward. Metrics are actionable, up-to-date, and regularly consulted. This session will present how Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business built a stronger data culture in one year with a revised strategic planning program as a catalyst. Starting from data silos, multiple conflicting spreadsheets with no source of truth, and plenty of speculative intuition, we have created buy-in for data governance, shared metrics, and improved data processes. We'll offer tips for motivating genuine interest in change via structured strategic planning, as well as suggestions for orchestrating a push for centralized metrics. We aren't at utopia yet, but we're making progress. You can too!

**Presenter(s):** Alison Lanski; Marnie Stahl;

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Strategies for strengthening stakeholder engagement with survey data  
*Discussion Group | Howard University Room (ML1) | Collaborating with Stakeholders*

Faculty climate surveys are a key resource for higher education institutions as they provide important information about faculty experiences as well as intentions to stay at the university. Staff from the University of Michigan ADVANCE Program will share and discuss new approaches to producing engaging reports, collaborating with stakeholders throughout the research lifecycle, and effective ways to communicate data. Attendees will learn from presenters and other participants about innovative ways to communicate climate survey data and consider how these strategies would be useful in their own work with faculty data and sharing findings with stakeholders.

**Presenter(s):** Kolbe Sussman; Brittany Dernberger; Anli Peng;

Streamlining Statewide Collection of Student-Unit Record Data  
*Speaker Session | Marquis Salon 15 Room (ML2) | Assessment & Evaluation*

Data collection and management is the most time intensive charge for institutional researchers. According to a 2021 survey, 26% of time is spent on this task on average (Association for Institutional Research, 2021). Less discussed are the minutiae of processing submitted data, which often involve a feedback loop between parties. This session covers the planning, implementation, and lessons from an initiative by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to streamline student-unit record data submission and processing. The hallmark of these efforts is the launch of our new student-unit record data portal, which automates a previously semi-manual process by empowering institutional researchers to submit and process standardized student unit record files directly to our SQL database via a secure web application. Institutions can then generate reports outlining potential issues or inconsistencies in the provided data before OSHE aggregates and submits data to IPEDS.

**Presenter(s):** Thomas Zimmerman; Justin Schaffer;

Understanding international student engagement: A comparative analysis  
*Speaker Session | Union Station Room (ML3) | Research & Policy*

International students have a significant presence in American colleges and universities playing a vital role in enhancing academic missions of higher education institutions. As universities seek to enhance the success of their international population, understanding their engagement is critical. Student engagement, the extent to which students involve themselves in educationally effective practices, is a key predictor of learning, persistence, and overall success. This study uses the latest NSSE to provide a nuanced picture of international student experience. We will present a comprehensive analysis comparing the engagement patterns and satisfaction of international and domestic students across NSSE's Engagement Indicators. We will analyze differences in key areas such as student-faculty interaction and interactions with diverse others. The findings will offer actionable insights for institutions for creating more inclusive and effective learning environments for all students.

**Presenter(s):** Cindy Xinquan Jiang; Lijun Liu;

9:45 AM - 11:45 AM

Closing Keynote

*Keynote | Marquis Ballroom 5-10 (ML2)*

9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Brunch buffet and seating

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Program and Closing Keynote speaker

Speaker: Matthew Soldner

Dr. Matthew Soldner serves as Acting Director of IES and Acting Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Between July 2018 and July 2025, he served as Acting Commissioner of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). Dr. Soldner's areas of expertise include the use of rigorous evidence to improve education policy and the implementation and evaluation of efforts to improve postsecondary outcomes for students. His PhD is from the University of Maryland's College of Education.

**Presenter(s):** Matthew Soldner; Christine Keller;