



June 30, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As we write this letter to introduce the 2019-2020 report of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) and reflect on the months since we gathered at the 2019 Forum in Denver, it is difficult to overstate how much has changed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has gravely impacted the health and well-being of individuals around the world, and rearranged many aspects of our personal and professional lives. At the same time, we are confronted with the terrible consequences of a history of racism, privilege, and injustice in the United States and work to seek atonement and just outcomes for all.

As our institutions and community look for alternative approaches and fresh insights to navigate the uncertainty, inequities, and disruption, we expect the need for data and analysis to make effective and ethical decisions to only increase. We are committed to ensuring that AIR remains flexible, responsive, and relevant to meet your new and emerging needs and those of our community.

Our ability to make that commitment is based in part on the stable foundation and investments by the 2019-20 Board of Directors and staff. Because of the extraordinary circumstances, we did not write a formal report. However, we invite you to review highlights of the past year by viewing the recording of the May 27 business meeting or its supporting slides and script as well as the audited financial statements from 2019.

Some of the highlights include:

- [The AIR Statement of Ethical Principles](#), developed with significant input from the community and approved by the Board in August 2019. The Statement is a guide for the use of higher education data and outlines 11 overarching principles
- [Change with Analytics](#), a joint statement developed by AIR, EDUCAUSE, and NACUBO. Change with Analytics urges broader and more intentional use of analytics for data-informed decisions that benefit students and institutions.
- A **Data Literacy Institute**, currently under development through a partnership between AIR and the Association for Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). Funded by Ascendium, the Institute establishes the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and habits needed for individuals to use data strategically to make better and ethical decisions.

AIR also completed three long-term investments in 2019-2020:

- **Upgraded technology** to improve the user experience and increase engagement, including an association management system and an online community platform to facilitate communication and idea sharing.
- **Updated logo and visual branding** to help differentiate our association, ensure consistency, and more effectively communicate the value of data-informed decision making.
- **Redesigned and modernized website** to allow users to find what they need more quickly and better reflect our new visual brand. The redesigned website won the Sitefinity Nonprofit Website of the Year.



AIR is committed to providing solutions and programs to support you during these tough times and has unveiled several new programs and resources to help.

- [AIR Hub](#), a new online community, provides a space to engage in meaningful discussions, share resources, and ask important questions.
- The **Coffee Chats** series offers a way for community members to connect on common questions and challenges. Many of these conversations will bring in data from flash polls we're conducting to better understand your current challenges and needs.

In addition to these new programs, AIR continues to provide high-quality webinars several times each month as well as IPEDS training and online courses. We encourage you to visit airweb.org for more information about these programs, resources, and how to get involved.

AIR remains committed to the values envisioned by our founders. Since AIR's inception, community engagement has been the cornerstone to sharing knowledge, research, and innovative practices, which in turn advances the impact of institutional research within higher education. Recent events make such engagements even more critical as we adjust to new realities affecting the institutions we serve.

The accomplishments from the past year attest to the continued importance of investments that focus on increased community engagement, collaboration, and knowledge acquisition. However, the realization of the returns on these investments is contingent upon your continued participation and input.

How does AIR sustain its relevancy in a higher education environment characterized by change and uncertainty? Simply put, your voice secures the future direction of AIR. Your engagement and contributions ensure the relevancy of our community, our profession, and our association through these uncertain times.

So, do not hesitate to reach out, share ideas, engage, and connect. We are counting on you!
air@airweb.org

Take good care and be well in all endeavors.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin B. Fortner".

Martin B. Fortner
2019-20 President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine M. Keller".

Christine M. Keller
Executive Director & CEO