



ASSOCIATION
FOR INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH

2024-25

Annual Report

June 2024-May 2025

Leading Forward through Change

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Dear Colleagues,

In a time of accelerated change across higher education, one constant remains: the strength of the AIR community.

Over the past year, we've seen long-standing norms and priorities shift—from debates over institutional autonomy and academic freedom to increased scrutiny of DEI efforts and declining federal investment in education and research. Even foundational structures like the National Center for Education Statistics and the IPEDS system faces disruption.

These changes are not abstract. They shape how we work, how our institutions operate, and how we serve students.

AIR has felt this shift firsthand. After more than two decades, our federal subcontract for IPEDS training was not renewed for the 2025–26 cycle—bringing a significant chapter to a close.

Still, AIR remains focused, grounded, and forward-looking.

Even with the conclusion of our federal subcontract, we will provide IPEDS training under the AIR brand through our Data & Decisions Academy to ensure this essential support remains available – including no cost options.

We've made other intentional, strategic decisions to adapt in a shifting landscape—supported by a vibrant community of professionals like you who are learning from one another and growing together. And grow we have. In just 18 months, AIR's membership has nearly tripled—from 2,500 to over 7,000—thanks to the success of our organizational membership model. This expansion brings more perspectives, stronger collaboration, and broader impact.

We've also expanded our reach and resources:

- We joined the Washington Higher Education Secretariat, amplifying our voice in national policy conversations.
- We co-developed the Change with Analytics Playbook with NACUBO and EDUCAUSE to support institutions building data-informed cultures.
- We equip professionals to lead with clarity and purpose through the Data Literacy Institute and AIR LEADS.
- And we are expanding our direct services to institutions through AIR Data & Decisions Consulting. This work is grounded in AIR's longstanding knowledge and deep practitioner expertise, built over decades of working alongside the field.

Through it all, our mission remains unchanged: to empower professionals to use data ethically, effectively, and with purpose. Data-literate institutions make better decisions, strengthen policy, and create more equitable outcomes for students.

Thank you for being part of this steadfast community. Your insight, dedication, and integrity are what make AIR not just a resource, but a place of belonging and shared purpose. No matter the challenge, this community holds steady—and helps shape a better future for higher education.

With appreciation,



Brent Drake

2024-25 Chair, AIR Board
of Directors



Christine M. Keller

Executive Director & CEO

01

Contract and Grant Deliverables:

Partnering for Collective Impact

Data are powerful and consequential institutional assets. A higher education institution's capacity for leveraging data for decision making and to support student-centered transformation reflects the collective efforts of its people. AIR works at the intersection of people and data to build the individual and institutional competencies necessary

to use data, information, and analytics in ways that are effective, ethical, and impactful. On behalf of its members, AIR is committed to expanding data capacity, data access, and data literacy across higher education. This commitment is reflected in the following AIR project and partnerships from the past year.



Gates Foundation Investments

AIR is a collaborator in several Gates Foundation projects and initiatives to further the work of institutional transformation in support of equitable student success. The Gates Foundation recognizes the essential role of data capacity and institutional research within all activities, services, and decisions in the higher education environment, and has turned to AIR for leadership and expertise in this realm.

Data Capacity Partner

AIR has a direct investment as a data capacity partner in a Gates Foundation-sponsored ecosystem—Higher Endeavor. Higher Endeavor is designed to be an open marketplace through which institutions receive assistance in implementing solutions and strengthening foundational capacity areas, including institutional research and data. Through the Higher Endeavor ecosystem, AIR continues to partner with national organizations to provide professional development and training for institution-based higher education professionals within and beyond IR. 2024-2025 engagements include a data governance webinar, Power BI training, and a data definitions project for Growing Inland Achievement (GIA) institutions; participation in an American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) Tribal College and University conference and the UNCF UNITE conference; and national ecosystem convenings.

National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) Training

The PDP is a data democratization tool that allows institutions to scale internal student success reporting and evidence-based decision making. AIR receives funding from the Gates Foundation to provide training for PDP institutions within and beyond the ecosystem. Through our PDP Training Center, AIR provides virtual and in-person workshops, a multi-week virtual submission course, video tutorials, and an online community.

Change with Analytics Playbook

In collaboration with EDUCAUSE and NACUBO—and with support from the Gates Foundation—AIR co-developed the *Change with Analytics Playbook*, released in August 2024. Designed to support institutional teams in advancing their analytics capacity, the Playbook features 16 customizable “plays” aligned with the priorities outlined in the 2019 Joint Statement on Analytics. This initiative exemplifies AIR’s commitment to building the field’s capacity to use data responsibly and effectively at all levels.



National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS Training

With the non-renewal of the third period of AIR's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) training, AIR submitted its final reports for its subcontract for the 2024-25 cycle. The submission marks the end of over two decades of federally funded training to increase the IPEDS data quality and use.

The 2024-25 annual training report documented over 12,400 training interactions across three online delivery methods: workshops, courses, and tutorials. With the assistance of the IPEDS educators, 52 IPEDS workshops offered by AIR, and over 1,200 participants enrolled in one of the ten mentor-supported IPEDS Keyholder online courses.

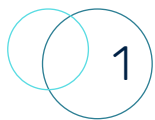
AIR also hosted the NCES National Data Institute, which provides an intensive introduction to NCES datasets and research methodologies. The reports illustrate the broad reach of the training and its robust value and outcomes for those participants.

While the 2024-25 cycle marks the conclusion of the IPEDS subcontract and will be deeply felt across the community, AIR's commitment to providing education and training related to federal datasets remains in place. We will provide [IPEDS-related training](#) under the AIR brand through our Data & Decisions Academy to ensure this essential support remains available.

02 Programs and Services

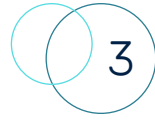
Meeting the Needs of Stakeholders

To advance the effective, ethical, and impactful use of data and analytics to make better decisions, AIR offers programs, services, and resources in four areas:



1 Education and Training

Provide opportunities to meet the current and future professional development needs of the community.



3 Community and Networks

Create and engage professionals and organizations to learn, connect, and collaborate.



2 Knowledge and Research

Serve as a center of innovation for the creation and exchange of research, practice, and tools.



4 Advocacy and Policy

Support the expanded use of data and analysis in higher education, often through partnerships with other organizations and groups.

Education and Training

AIR's professional development opportunities reflect its commitment to building the skills and abilities of individuals, while advancing the institutional use of data and analysis through comprehensive, accessible training, and development. Offerings include options for individuals as well as institutional teams. Visit www.airweb.org/calendar for all upcoming professional development opportunities.

Annual Conference

AIR Forum: AIR's annual conference, AIR Forum, is the largest global gathering of higher education professionals who build and support data-informed decision cultures. This conference includes presentations by colleagues and thought leaders representing all sectors of higher education and an Exhibit Hall featuring the latest tools and resources to support data use for decision making.

AIR Data & Decisions® Academy

Courses and Workshops

Foundations Workshops: These workshops are designed for those new to institutional research or looking to strengthen foundational skills. Topics include: research design, data, survey design, descriptive statistics, and effective reporting.

A Holistic Approach to IR: This online course emphasizes integrating all aspects of IR, IE, and assessment into a unified approach. It helps

professionals see the bigger picture and apply data insights across various institutional functions.

AIR LEADS: This leadership development program prepares IR/IE professionals for leadership roles through a mix of virtual and in-person seminars. It covers essential leadership skills such as political savviness, effective communication, strategic planning, and advocacy for data-informed decision-making.

Training Centers

IPEDS Training Center: AIR now provides IPEDS-related training under the AIR brand through our Data & Decisions Academy to ensure this essential support remains available to the field.

Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) Training Center: The center provides training on the submission and use of PDP data to improve student outcomes. Workshops, tutorials, and resources focus on analyzing academic momentum and retention using the PDP dashboards.

Webinars

Webinars: AIR's webinars focus on timely topics relevant to institutional research and data analytics, including trending topics, best practices, and relevant policy updates.





Knowledge and Research

To support and expand data-informed decision making within higher education, the association contributes to the production, collection, and dissemination of innovative research, practice, and tools.

AIR National Survey

Over 600 institutions participated in the fourth iteration of the [AIR National Survey](#) in fall 2024. The National Survey is a nationally representative, longitudinal study of the institutional research/ effectiveness (IR/IE) function within U.S. higher education institutions, with previous administrations in 2015, 2018, and 2021. The survey collects information about IR/IE office structure, leadership, resources, and effectiveness to better understand and improve IR/IE office operations. Results from the 2024 National Survey will be released in the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026. The next administration of the survey will fall 2027.

AIR Professional File

Articles published in the biannual [AIR Professional File](#) volumes are journal-length publications grounded in relevant literature that synthesize current issues, present new processes or models, or share practical applications related to an institution's data function, including institutional research and institutional effectiveness. Under the leadership of Iryna Muse, editor, and Inger Bergom, assistant editor, two issues were published in 2024-2025.

2025 WINTER VOLUME

- [Article 176: A Machine Learning Approach to Predicting Master's Degree Completion at the University of Texas at San Antonio](#)
Fikrewold Bitew and Lauren Apgar
- [Article 177: Survival Analysis of Transfer Students](#)
Shulin Zhou, Yihui Li, Margot Neverett, Beverly King, Kyle Chapman, and Sharon McNair

2025 SUMMER VOLUME

- [Article 178: The Relationship between High-Risk Courses and Retention in University](#)
Chen Zong and Suzann M. Koller
- [Article 179: Did They Get What They Came For? Work-Integrated Learning and Postgraduate Employment Outcomes](#)
Cassandra R. Kepple, Samantha Nix, Andrew Brady and Jackson de Andrade Silva





Community and Networks

AIR provides spaces and opportunities for the higher education community to learn, collaborate, and connect around topics of interest, including effective data visualizations, college rankings, IR staffing, equity in analytics and machine learning, and leadership in building data-informed cultures—to name just a few.

2025 AIR Forum

The 2025 AIR Forum was held May 20-23 at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Florida. More than 1,200 higher education professionals working in institutional research, institutional effectiveness, assessment, and other data/analytics fields attended the four-day event learning and sharing

through over 240 concurrent sessions, discussion groups, poster sessions, and panels. Opportunities for networking and building professional connections were also integral to the conference agenda. More than 100 representatives from 31 organizations and companies also showcased the latest tools, software, and solutions that support data and analytics work as sponsors and exhibitors. Additionally, more than 375 attendees contributed knowledge, expertise and scholarship as session presenters, and more than 230 members supported the event by volunteering to review proposals and provide feedback and guidance on program content and general planning. Participants rated the conference as high-quality and worthwhile, with over 90% indicating they would recommend the AIR Forum to a colleague.

AIR Hub

Launched in May 2020, [AIR Hub](#) is an online community open to all stakeholders within the AIR community. It is a space for participants to ask and answer questions, share resources, and connect around topics related to the production and use of data, office management, emerging higher education trends, leadership and more. AIR Hub includes dedicated groups for community colleges, system offices, graduate students, and small IR offices to discuss their special challenges and experiences.

AIR Hub also hosts the [IPEDS Knowledge Exchange](#), free for AIR members and nonmembers alike to connect, share resources, and ask each other questions.

Coffee Chats

These informal, [virtual gatherings](#) provide opportunities for community members to discuss current challenges, share insights, and network with peers in a relaxed setting.

Volunteers

Members of the IR community served in nearly 400 volunteer roles, helping with the AIR Forum, publications, and much more. Thank you, volunteers!

AIR HUB BY THE NUMBERS AS OF JULY 31, 2025

7,619

Total Community Members

12,418

Total Posts

JOIN AIR HUB



Advocacy and Policy

AIR engages in a broad range of regional, national, and global conversations to advance evidence-based decision making and expand data literacy across functional areas of higher education. Through partnerships, coalitions, and direct engagement, AIR works to ensure that data-informed perspectives are integrated into institutional practices and policy development.

In fall 2024, AIR was accepted as a member of the Washington Higher Education Secretariat, a national convening body of higher education associations. This membership enhances AIR's ability to represent the priorities of data professionals in federal policy discussions—an increasingly vital role as debates over education policy, funding, and accountability continue to evolve. AIR's presence in these conversations helps ensure that policy decisions are informed by those who understand the ethical and effective use of data to support students, institutions, and the public good.

Since joining the Secretariat, AIR has signed onto several community letters, including efforts to renew the federal-higher education partnership, extend reporting deadlines for Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment, and emphasize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. More broadly, AIR advocates for policies, regulations, and legislation that support robust data infrastructure, availability, transparency, and accountability. The association brings the voice of data professionals to the table—helping shape a policy environment that values sound data practices and their role in advancing student success.



Activities include:

- Steering Committee: Exploring the Future of College Admissions
- Higher Endeavor—Gates Foundation Postsecondary Ecosystem
- IHEP Postsecondary Data Collaborative
- IPEDS Technical Review Panels
- IPEDS National Postsecondary Education Cooperative
- Common Data Set Advisory Board

03

AIR Data & Decisions[®] Consulting

In May 2025, AIR formally launched **Data & Decisions Consulting**, designed to support institutions and data professionals in strengthening their capacity to use data effectively, ethically, and purposefully.

Grounded in decades of experience at the intersection of people and data, AIR offers customized consulting services that align with institutional goals and the evolving demands of higher education. The practice builds on AIR's longstanding commitment to building data capacity through education, training, and applied resources, while expanding our ability to provide direct, hands-on support to institutions navigating complex challenges.

A Mission-Aligned Approach

AIR Consulting is shaped by the same principles that guide our broader work—collaboration, capacity-building, and responsiveness to the higher education landscape. Consulting engagements are designed to meet institutions where they are and help them move toward more effective and sustainable data practices. Areas of support include:

- **Planning and Implementation:** Assistance with setting up data platforms, aligning data strategy with institutional goals, and establishing governance frameworks.
- **Technical Support:** Embedded assistance with tools such as Power BI, Tableau, and Excel, including dashboard development and visualization support.
- **Audits and Optimization:** Evaluation of current systems and reporting processes, with recommendations to improve alignment, efficiency, and use.
- **Training and Culture Building:** Capacity-building efforts focused on cross-functional teams, including workshops on data literacy, data use, and decision-making practices.

Supporting Institutional Capacity

AIR's consulting practice was expanded in response to growing demand from institutions for support in turning data into insight—and insight into action. Informed by years of close collaboration with IR/IE professionals and their colleagues, AIR's approach is grounded in field-based learning—applying insights in practice, refining through experience, and building a model that strengthens internal capacity rather than creating external dependence. Every engagement is a partnership grounded in the institution's priorities.

Projects have focused on data strategy development, visualization tools and reporting

optimization, IPEDS and PDP support, and cross-institutional training for data-informed decision making. Institutions have engaged AIR for both short-term assistance and longer-term collaborations, reflecting the flexibility of the program and the diversity of institutional needs.

As data expectations in higher education continue to evolve, AIR Consulting expands the ways AIR can serve and support our community—helping institutions respond to complexity with clarity, collaboration, and confidence.

Learn more at airweb.org/consulting.



04

Association Governance

As the governing body of the association, the Board of Directors sets expectations for what AIR will accomplish on behalf of its members and stakeholders. The Board also establishes the association's mission, purpose, and vision. For nearly 15 years, AIR has operated within a governing system called "policy governance," which is based on a system of integrated principles and agreements on how the Board will work together. Those principles outline how the Board will empower and hold accountable the association's executive director, how the Board will articulate the AIR's purpose (the "Ends") and set up the association for movement in that direction, and how the Board understands the role of members and stakeholders in the governance of the association.

Work of the Board

Each new Board has the honor and opportunity to build on the accomplishments of previous Boards. In keeping with that, the 2024-25 Board continued to develop various initiatives important to the IR/IE community.

- **Expanded on the Future of AIR standing committee work.** Over the last three Board years, each Board has expanded on the work of the Future of AIR Committee. This began with the adhoc IR Futures Committee work in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 Board years. On the committee's recommendations, the adhoc committee was turned into a standing committee for the Board year 2024-2025 and was renamed the Future of AIR Committee.

This year, the committee focused on incorporating future thinking into the Board's activities. The committee chose to focus on the strategic foresight toolset and drivers developed by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and conducted exercises with the Board at the in-person meetings to incorporate that work into Board efforts. First in October, the Board learned from two ASAE representatives about the strategic foresight toolset and then engaged in an exercise to apply the tools. The exercise centered around a driver of the future professional in IR/IE and how the field and the organization

need to respond to them. Then in spring, the Board utilized the strategic foresight toolset to examine potential future impacts of our organizational membership and the additional 5,500 organizational members that it brings to AIR and what it means to serve the broader data community. The committee's efforts culminated in a session at the May AIR Forum, where the chair of the committee, Adrea Hernandez, led members in the use of strategic foresight to consider the impact of the current disruption and uncertainty in the external environment on AIR and its members.

- **Clarified qualifications for Board participation.** A working group established a set of recommendations for modifying GP XII A.1. to clarify and streamline the eligibility requirements for Board and Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC) members. The changes were made to support the NEC in assembling a well-qualified and diverse pool of nominees, ensuring strong leadership for AIR's future.
- **Streamlined fiscal policy.** The Board took action in 2024-2025 to update and streamline significant portions of fiscal policy. First, the Board moved to modify the Bylaws to move the setting of membership fees directly under the Executive Offices purview rather than requiring approval from the Board. This moves the membership fees policy into alignment with other pricing decisions and the rest of the Board fiscal policy. Second, the Board amended GP EL V. and VII. to increase the limits on all fiscal transactions. The amounts had not been changed since 2011 and were updated to reflect inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- **Modified the Ends policy language to respond to actions from the federal**

government. Board year 2024-2025 coincided with the drastic federal actions to end DEI initiatives and redefine Title XI actions in the broader higher education landscape. These federal actions have led to significant changes around policy language, anti-discrimination definitions, and some practice in higher education. At the time, AIR was also a federal subcontractor and required to comply with Executive Order 14173, which included a requirement to eliminate the use of "affirmative action" and "illegal DEI policies" and "diversity initiatives." To comply with the EO and limit the organization's exposure, the Board modified our Ends policy language in a similar fashion to what is occurring more broadly in the postsecondary education sector. This change was made to protect the organization and positions future Boards to continue their work effectively in an evolving federal landscape.

- **Revised the Chair and Vice Chair election process.** The Board established a working group that ultimately made recommendations for modification to GP XVI. regarding the Chair and Vice Chair election process, which the Board approved. These revisions strengthened the nomination and election process for the Chair and Vice Chair to allow the Board to make a more informed decision. The Board utilized this new process to elect their Chair and Vice Chair for 2025-2026 during its meeting in March 2025.
- **Formed working group to determine procedures for off-cycle decisions.** The Board voted to form a working group to draft policy language to provide procedures for voting on urgent matters that occur off-cycle of regularly scheduled meetings but do not require an emergency meeting, such as modifying the schedule for monitoring reports.

- **Continued direct member engagement.**

The 2024–2025 Board continued the efforts of previous boards to communicate with members at a more individual level, but at scale. Board members hosted “Office Hours” at the AIR booth during the 2025 AIR Forum, giving members the chance to speak directly with the Board during an event where many members are in attendance. They also participated in online “Coffee Chats” to foster interaction among members and with the Board, with at least two Board members attending each session and several co-facilitating. Multiple “Board Corners” were published in the eAIR newsletter, highlighting the benefits of volunteer leadership, the importance of AIR elections, and the Board’s initiatives and strategic direction. Additionally, the Governance section of the AIR website was refreshed to improve usability and access to information, including the creation of a Board News section to share key decisions from Board meetings and to spotlight strategic initiatives.

These accomplishments reflect the commitment and leadership of the Board, NEC, and the Executive Office for the betterment of the AIR community members.

Elections for new AIR leaders were conducted throughout February 2025, and the results of the election were certified on March 5, 2025. In all, 15 percent of AIR individual members voted in the election and 27 percent of organizational member voting delegates voted.

Congratulations to our new volunteer leaders, who took office during AIR’s annual business meeting in May 2025.

Board Members-At-Large

- Vincent Castano
- Ivana Fredotovic
- Liile Lekena-Bayaga
- Jillian Morn

Nominations and Elections Committee

- Mel Jenkins-Simpson
- Linli Zhou

Elected Leadership 2025-26

The 2024–25 Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC) partnered with AIR members to recruit a strong and diverse pool of nominees for leadership positions. Guided by Board-established criteria, the NEC produced the slate of candidates for member voting.

05

Financial Report

Collectively, the AIR Board members are responsible for overseeing the financial health of the organization. Specific leadership responsibilities are delegated to the Treasurer who provides leadership for the independent annual audit and reviews the financial statements and findings from the independent audit on the financial state of the association. The Treasurer is also responsible for presenting an annual report of AIR's financial condition at the annual business meeting, managing Board travel, and researching comparable executive director compensation every three years. The Treasurer ensures that the Board has sufficient information to make sound financial policies.

Three of the executive director monitoring reports reviewed and discussed by the Board annually deal specifically with the association's finances and evaluate how the executive director handles the executive limitations set by the Board—(1) financial planning, (2) financial condition and activities, and (3) asset protection. The governance policies and executive limitations related to the association's finances provide a level of protection, set boundaries, and serve as a warning mechanism, if needed.

The firm of Thomas Howell Ferguson P.A., Certified Public Accountants of Tallahassee, Florida, audited the [2024 financial statements](#) of the association. The auditors issued a clean audit report that indicated that the audit disclosed no instances of significant deficiencies and/or material weaknesses in the association's internal controls. The December 31, 2024, audit was discussed and accepted by the Board on May 12, 2025.

Key findings on the current financial health of the association:

- 1

The unmodified opinion issued on the AIR Financial Statements indicated no reportable instances of significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls, and no material instances of noncompliance.
- 2

The unmodified opinion issued on the Major Federal Award Programs showed no reportable significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls over major federal programs. This is a specialized audit done because of AIR’s IPEDS training contract.
- 3

AIR’s net assets at the end of 2024 increased by \$436,667, for a year-end total of \$3,579,392.
- 4

Revenues from operations and investments were \$4,833,455—an increase of \$309,529 from 2023. Expenses for operations were \$4,396,788—an increase of \$104,642 from 2023.

2024 REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS AND INVESTMENTS

\$4,833,455



Grants and Contracts



AIR Forum



Membership



Investments



Education Programs

06 Leadership

2024–2025 Board of Directors



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The John N. Gardner
Institute for Excellence in
Undergraduate Education



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Northern Arizona University



Adrea Hernandez

University of Notre Dame



Wen Qi

Indiana University
Bloomington



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Karen Vance

The Pennsylvania
State University

2024–2025 Nominations & Elections Committee



NEC CHAIR

Eric Atchison

Arkansas State University
System



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Howard University



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AIR Staff Leadership



EXECUTIVE

DIRECTOR & CEO

Christine Keller



DEPUTY

DIRECTOR & CFO

Jason Lewis



ASSOCIATE DEPUTY

DIRECTOR

Leah Ewing Ross