Association for Institutional Research
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting
September 13, 2021

Attendees: Laura Palucki Blake, Michele Hansen, Braden Hosch, Heather Kelly, Elizabeth Lee, Mary Lelik, Mitchell Nesler, Junelyn Peeples, Christopher Pena, David Troutman, Karen Webber

Guests: Christine Keller, Jason Lewis, Charlie McCumber, Miguel Pineirovigo, and Leah Ross from the AIR Executive Office.

Absent: Maren Hess (approved absence)

Call to Order

President Junelyn Peeples called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. ET. A quorum was established.

Required Approvals and Acknowledgements

Meeting Minutes

David Troutman provided a review of the August 9, 2021 virtual meeting and moved to accept the minutes. Laura Palucki Blake seconded. The motion passed.

Form 990

Braden Hosch offered an overview of Forum 990, a required document for non-profit organizations. Jason Lewis explained that the document as a management document – communication to the federal government – and how it is different from the annual audit. Charlie McCumber shared details about the document, including how membership revenues are allocated per IRS guidelines. In general, this form presents AIR’s year to the IRS with key information, including expenses, revenues, grants provided, etc. to assess whether the Association meets the requirements of a 501(c)3 organization. Jason Lewis further explained that as a charitable organization, AIR’s use of the term “member” is different than other organizations such as trade organizations and others with “members” which would receive AIR’s assets if it were to dissolve, which can confuse AIR’s use of the term “member”.

Committee Updates

Meeting Schedule: A master schedule of committee meetings is available to the Board in its Teams folder.

Nominations and Elections Committee: Heather Kelly noted that nominations are open (and opened two weeks earlier than last year), and emphasized the importance of Board members to submit nominees. Currently nominations are lagging previous years, perhaps due to the early launch.

Governance Orientation and Training Committee: Karen Webber shared that the committee met in August and focused on review of evaluation of reviews of pervious events and plans for the next orientation.
Board Structure for Accountability and Effectiveness Committee: Heather Kelly shared that the committee presented draft recommendations to the Board in May 2021 and a great deal of feedback was received. The committee is working to address the questions raised and will send a Q&A document for the Board’s review approximately two weeks prior to the October 2021 Board meeting, when an extensive conversation will be facilitated. The committee will also meet with Board members one-on-one to garner input, as well as an external (non-Board) member.

Board of Director’s Role as Ambassador of AIR Committee: Michele Hansen reported that the committee met earlier this month with a primary goal of reviewing the committee’s charge. At the next meeting, in October, the committee will begin to develop a proposal as part of its charge.

Membership Committee: Braden Hosch thanked the three years’ worth of membership committees that have contributed to what is now a proposal to add an organizational membership option without removing any current membership categories. A lot of stakeholder feedback has been gathered as part of this process. This option will expand the number of people that AIR can serve both outside and inside IR offices. This is a revenue-neutral proposal with the potential to generate revenue, with expectation that this will raise the profile of IR. It is expected that this new category will be of most interest to presidents and provosts eager to affiliated with AIR and the field of IR more closely, which is similar to how some sister associations are structured, including EDUCAUSE and NACUBO. The proposed pricing is based on FTE and discounted based on resourcing, likely determined with IPEDS information. The intent is for the Board to vote on this proposal in October 2021. No bylaw or constitution changes are required, but the Board approves membership pricing.

The Board’s discussion about Braden’s comments included the differentiation between an institution option to be a member vs. supporting individual members and subsequent cost-benefit analyses. The impact on Forum attendance was also referenced with the potential of additional participation. Attention to unintended consequences of this change, including the impact on efforts to diversify membership and leadership, was raised. The benefit to larger institutions seems clear, but there is some question about the potential benefit to mid-sized, small, and less-resourced institutions, particularly those with one-person IR offices; it was noted that this expansion does not change current options and opportunities.

This conversation will be continued at greater length at the October 2021 Board meeting.

Executive Office Updates

Christine Keller noted that the decision to make the October 2021 Board meeting virtual was based on current health and safety guidance. Regarding the building sale, minor improvements will be made per the recommendation of the real estate agent’s advice. Christine noted that she will ask institution and system-based Board members to be pilot testers for the 2021 National Survey of IR Offices (one per office). Institutions that complete the pilot test will not need to do so again for the formal launch.

Jason Lewis shared an overview of the Data Literacy Institute, part of AIR’s Data Literacy Program, which is in partnership with APLU and funded by Ascendium. The pilot program kicked off this month with five institutions and will continue with six additional institutions in 2022. The Institute is cross-functional by design; just over 10% of participants are in IR/IE, and the rest of participants are faculty or administrators. This is the first time in AIR’s history to engage in this type of work and to operationalize the challenge laid out in the Ends to empower the broad set of individuals who work in higher education (including and beyond IR/IE) to use data to make decisions.
This work started with the 2016 publication of the *Statement of Aspirational Practice for IR* which calls for expansion of the definition of decision makers, to adopt a student-focus approaches to our work, to recognize the data function, and to identify a leader to oversee that function, commensurate with a CFO or CDO. In subsequent years, the field made the statement its own through use by institutions and systems. A lot of the work being done was centered around attention to the data function, yet what was missing was the corresponding education and training. IR professionals began to operationalize this for their institutional colleagues in response to the dearth of professional development in this area. In 2018, AIR started the process of developing content to be of service to the field, which resulted in the current Institute, the details of which Jason presented. AIR owns the curricula (the current partnership with APLU is an agreement to deliver the curricula), which is focused on the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and habits required to build evidence-based decision cultures; it does not train analysts or data experts.

Discussion included institutions’ approaches to deliver content for data professionals and leaders separately, and how that is potentially juxtaposed to the approach to holistic data-informed decision cultures, as well as the challenge to translate data professionals’ work into leaders’ action (the last mile problem). Approaches to types of institutions beyond the pilot with APLU (large public schools) were also discussed, and what happens with momentum for this work is tied to a person instead of an institutional culture (and that person leaves).

**Other Business**

**Annual Report:** Junelyn Peeples recognized the recently released report and the leadership of Past-President Heather Kelly through her tenure, who in turn acknowledged the contributions of the Executive Office.

**October 2021 2-Day Board Meeting:** Junelyn Peeples welcomed review of contributions to the agenda for the next Board meeting.

**2021-2022 Board Goals:** Junelyn Peeples plans to add points of evidence to the goals and invited Board members to review and contribute to the information as well.

**Intersection Between Stakeholders, Future of IR, and Policy Governance Ends:** Junelyn Peeples noted the intent to take 2020 Stakeholders Survey, Future of IR Topics, Review of Ends and Evolution of Ends to more intentionally map the Board’s conversations and goals.

**New Business**

None.

**Board Effectiveness Poll**

Christine Keller posted a survey link in the meeting chat and the Board’s Teams site.

**Adjournment**

Junelyn Peeples adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m. ET.