



The Electronic Newsletter of the Association for Institutional Research (e-AIR)

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Serving Institutional Research Professionals and Those Engaged in Management Research, Policy Analysis & Planning Since October 22, 1986

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The newsletter welcomes news items related to management research, policy analysis and planning; persons changing jobs or retiring; requests for help or suggestions from readers; announcements of professional meetings and conferences; comments about recent publications; abstracts of papers which authors are willing to share; job announcements; philosophical and/or humorous thoughts; and more. This online publication is available free to anyone interested in institutional research.

If you wish to subscribe, change your subscription address, or unsubscribe, go to <http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=133> If you would like to submit articles, requests or information for consideration and inclusion in the newsletter, please contact Marne Einarson, Editor, at: (mke3@cornell.edu).

Persons seeking jobs in institutional research, planning, or policy analysis should plan to check the AIR web page every couple of days for new positions. Point your browser to the following URL: www.airweb.org (look under "Jobs").

For further information regarding the Association for Institutional Research, contact Randy Swing, Executive Director, AIR, Suite 211, 1435 Piedmont Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32308; Telephone: 850-385-4155, Fax:850/385-5180 or via e-mail: (rswing@airweb.org).

Announcements & Information

Not an AIR member yet?

...Join Today

AIR offers three membership types: Individual, Graduate Student, or Organizational – choose the one that best meets your needs. As an AIR member, you'll receive several exclusive benefits, including:



- Discounts on journal subscriptions and other publications
- Participation in the AIR Forum; the premier meeting for IR and assessment professionals
- Access to AIR Webinars and other web-based training opportunities
- First notices about AIR scholarships and grants
- Participation in an array of networking opportunities

New members receive *The Primer for Institutional Research*, just for joining. For more information or to join* today, please visit us at www.airweb.org/membership

**The AIR membership year runs from July 1 through June 30.*

AIR Research and Dissertation Grant Awards - 2009

AIR Office (air@airweb.org)

AIR, with support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC), awarded **more than \$278,000 to 13 institutional researchers for 2009**. The Research and Dissertation Grant Program has supported research on a wide range of issues of critical importance to U.S. higher education for 13 years.

For the 2009 awards, faculty and practitioners were eligible for research grants of up to \$40,000 and Doctoral students were eligible for dissertation grants of up to \$20,000 for one year of research on higher education issues using datasets from NCES, NSF, or the annual NPEC focus topic. AIR is proud to play a role in improving institutional research in postsecondary educational institutions.

Please visit www.airweb.org/2009GrantAwards for a complete listing of the 2009 award recipients.

AIR Member Recollection Survey Reminder – Please Participate!

The AIR Board has endorsed a project to compile our association's 50-year history before it is irretrievably lost. During the coming year, we will collect data from multiple sources about AIR activities, governance and policy decisions, and member recollections to produce a Gestalt of AIR history. Our goal is to digitize this history and produce an analysis of findings for presentation to AIR at the 2010 anniversary Forum in Chicago next May.

Obviously, an undertaking of this magnitude can only succeed with the support of all of AIR's members. Each contribution you provide to the construction of this history will be part of a legacy we members offer back to our Association. Therefore, whether you joined AIR just this year or in its earliest days, we are asking you to take a few minutes to share your knowledge.

We have designed an AIR Member Recollection Survey, hoping to hear about your memories—both the highlights of your tenure as an IR professional and as a member of the Association for Institutional Research. We would appreciate your completing this survey as candidly and completely as your time allows. Since the survey may take a little while to complete, it is designed to allow you to stop and start without losing your data. Please take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey:

<http://www.survey.nasfaa.org/se.ashx?s=0D4B47FE58FC520D>.

We would also appreciate your sharing the survey URL with as many colleagues as you know, including those who might have retired or those who do not receive e-AIR. Thank you for helping us compile our Association's history.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Rice
Associate Vice Provost, IR
University of Alaska Anchorage
angar@uaa.alaska.edu

Dawn Geronimo Terkla
Associate Provost, Institutional Research, Assessment & Evaluation
Tufts University

Margaret (Peggy) Cohen
Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research Emerita
George Washington University

Meihua Zhai
Director of Research & Analysis
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Obtaining Published Ranking Table Data From U.S. News

Robert Morse, U.S. News & World Report (rmorse@usnews.com)

U.S. News will again provide, free of charge to any institutional researcher, a series of Excel spreadsheets with the ranking data that appeared in the rankings tables in the America's Best Colleges 2010 Edition guide book. Those ranking tables were also published on the U.S. News Web site in PDF format on August 20, 2009 in the Premium Online Edition. These spreadsheets will not be posted on a Web site; they will be e-mailed directly to each individual. These spreadsheets will only contain the data that appear in the published ranking tables, not all the data used to compute the rankings.

This information is provided for the convenience of AIR members by U.S. News to assist them in their analytical responsibilities. Data is only available from the America's Best Colleges 2010 Edition guide book ranking tables (those published online at <http://www.usnews.com> on August 20, 2009). To request these tables, or if you have questions about this offer, please send an e-mail to either rmorse@usnews.com or sflanigan@usnews.com. The e-mail request should contain a one- or two-sentence reason for the request to access the data for your school or institution. Expect a turnaround time of up to 10 business days before receiving the Excel files.

Ranking tables that were published in previous years are not available at this time.

This is NOT a permission to print or repost the ranking tables publicly. The data can be used for internal research purposes only.

Thanks,
Robert J. Morse
Director of Data Research U.S. News & World Report
rmorse@usnews.edu

AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey 2009-10

John Curtis, AAUP (jcurtis@aaup.org)

We will be sending out specific information regarding the 2009-10 survey process as soon as possible. We do not anticipate any significant change in reporting categories or definitions, but the process for submitting and verifying data may change. We are hoping to make changes to the Web interface for submitting and reviewing data, and then later to the interface for ordering custom reports. We plan to ask for feedback from our survey contacts before we implement these changes.

If you know that the survey contact person or other information about your institution will be changing, please send an e-mail to aaupfcs@aaup.org.

We do plan to carry out a pilot test for collecting individual-level faculty compensation data. We will be contacting those who have already expressed an interest soon; if you are interested in participating please send us an e-mail.

We are also developing a brief questionnaire to get a sense of institutional plans regarding faculty employment, in light of the current national economic situation. We hope to distribute that questionnaire to survey data contacts by mid-September.

AAUP Research Office
John Curtis, Director of Research and Public Policy
Michael Kinsella, Research Assistant
aaupfcs@aaup.org

Changing Scene

This portion of the newsletter is devoted to keeping you informed about changes among our colleagues such as moves to new positions and/or institutions, newly hired colleagues, professional recognition honors, retirements, deaths, etc. To include an announcement in "The Changing Scene," send a note with the key facts to Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu).

Connie Brizuela (hanuman@uwyo.edu) retired this month from the University of Wyoming after 30 years of service. Connie served as the Director of the Office of Institutional Analysis since its formation in 1988. She was President of Rocky Mountain AIR in 2001/02. Connie's enthusiasm, wisdom, and talent will be missed, but we wish her a wonderful retirement full of time for grandchildren and horse ranching pleasure.

Doris Pudloski passed away on August 4 at her residence. She was the Director of Institutional Research at John Carroll University. Memorial contributions may be made in memory of Doris Pudloski to the Fr. Lavelle Scholarship Fund at: John Carroll University, University Advancement, 20700 North Park Blvd., University Hts., OH 44118. Colleagues will remember Doris's keen sense of humor, and that her vast historical knowledge made their community richer.

The National Student Clearinghouse has appointed **Dr. Judith R. James** as director of National Collegiate Initiatives. Dr. James is responsible for promoting the Clearinghouse's postsecondary services to colleges and universities. Prior to joining the National Student Clearinghouse, Dr. James held executive level positions in higher education at the national, state and campus levels.

This summer, **Rob Toutkoushian** left Indiana University and is now a Professor at the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia. He may be reached at the following e-mail address: rtoutkou@uga.edu.

Publications

NCES Publications

2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/09) Field Test

This report describes the methodology and findings for the field test of the 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/09). These students, who started their postsecondary education during the 2002-03 academic year, were first interviewed as part of the 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04) field test. BPS:04/09 is the second follow-up of this cohort. The BPS:04/09 field test was used to plan, implement, and evaluate methodological procedures, instruments, and systems proposed for use in the full-scale study scheduled for the 2008-09 school year. The report provides the sampling design and methodologies used in the field test. It also describes data collection outcomes, including response rates, interview burden, and results of incentive, mailing, and prompting experiments. In addition, the report provides details on the evaluation of data quality for reliability of responses, item nonresponse, and question delivery and data entry error. Recommendations for the full-scale study are provided for the sampling design, locating and tracing procedures, interviewer training, data collection, and instrumentation.

To view, download and print the report in PDF format please visit:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=200901>.

Web Tables: Choosing a Postsecondary Institution: Considerations Reported by Students

Data presented in these tables come from the 2003–04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/06), a survey that tracks new postsecondary students through their postsecondary education and into the labor force. In 2003-04, BPS:04/06 students had just entered postsecondary education for the first time. These tables focus on these students' demographic characteristics as well as the factors they considered before selecting a postsecondary institution and the reasons they chose the postsecondary institution in which they enrolled. Results are displayed separately for recent high school graduates and nonrecent high school graduates by the type of institution in which they were enrolled: public 2-year, public 4-year, or private not-for-profit 4-year colleges.

To view, download and print the report in PDF format please visit:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009186>.

Students Who Study Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in Postsecondary Education

Using data from the 1995-96 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01), this Statistics in Brief focuses on undergraduates who enter STEM programs and examines their characteristics and postsecondary outcomes (persistence and degree completion) several years after beginning postsecondary education. Findings include:

- Twenty-three percent of 1995–96 beginning postsecondary students had majored in a STEM field at some point between their initial enrollment in 1995–96 and about 6 years later, as of 2001.
- STEM entrants generally did better than non-STEM entrants in terms of bachelor's degree attainment and overall persistence.
- Among all STEM entrants between 1995–96 and 2001, some 53 percent persisted in a STEM field by either completing a degree in a STEM field or staying enrolled in a STEM field, and the remaining 47 percent left STEM fields by either switching to a non-STEM field or leaving postsecondary education without earning any credential.

To view, download and print the report in PDF format please visit:
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009161>.

Meetings and Events

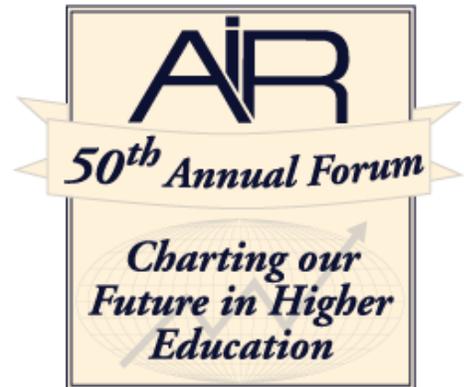
AIR 2010 Forum Call for Proposals

AIR Office (air@airweb.org)

AIR will begin accepting proposals for our 50th Forum taking place on May 29 – **June 2**, 2009 in Chicago, Illinois on Monday, August 31, 2009. Submit your proposal and share your scholarship and knowledge as we chart our future in higher education.

We look forward to receiving your proposal and we will see you in Chicago!

Please visit forum.airweb.org for more information.



From Your Local Arrangements Committee - Get Your Kicks on Route 66 in Chicago!

Kathy Miller, Governors State University (k-miller@govst.edu)

Route 66 was established November 11, 1926 by the National Highway Commission. It begins in Chicago, traveling through Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and ending in Santa Monica, California; a distance of 2,450 miles. During the Great Depression, Route 66 became the primary road for people travelling westbound. John Steinbeck called it the "Mother Road" in his book "The Grapes of Wrath" which was set during the depression. The designation in 1926 of Route 66 as a national highway acknowledged the road as the nation's principal east-west artery between Chicago and the west coast.

Bobby Troupe composed the song "Route 66" made famous by Nat King Cole. As the interest about Route 66 grew so did the popularity of the song. It has now been recorded by hundreds of artists, including the Rolling Stones. Just as the Mother Road drew postwar motorists to the romance and excitement of driving Route 66, you can still find that same excitement today – beginning with the starting point of Route 66 on Adams and Michigan, in the heart of Chicago. Route 66 in Chicago's Loop ran along Jackson Boulevard and Adams Street; parallel thoroughfares packed with historic sites and structures.

There are many great eateries on Route 66 in Chicago. For a hearty breakfast, visit Lou Mitchell's – family owned and operated since 1923. As a special treat, donut holes are passed to patrons waiting in line.

Lou Mitchell's
565 W Jackson
(312) 939-3111 phone
(312) 939-4400 fax
www.loumitchellsrestaurant.com

Enjoy lunch at the famous Berghoff Café, serving M-F, 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. The café is located in the lower level of the historic Berghoff building.

Berghoff Café
17 West Adams Street
(312) 312.427.7399
www.berghoff.com

One community to visit on Route 66 is "Greektown", located on Madison and Halstead. The community plays host to more than 10 different restaurants serving Greek cuisine. To learn more about "Greektown" visit www.greektownchicago.org

For Route 66 tour information, contact Windy City Road Warrior Tours at www.windycityroadwarrior.com The Windy City Road Warrior is David G. Clark, the author of "Route 66 in Chicago". Mr. Clark has written numerous articles for publications about Route 66 in Chicago. He conducts bus tours and gives lectures and visual presentations. Tours last about 2 hours and are about 1 mile in distance. Some stair-climbing is required. Group and Individual rates are available - e-mail dave@windycityroadwarrior.com for more information.



Register for NEAIR 2009 Conference

NEAIR is pleased to announce that its conference registration opens August 31st. The conference plenary sessions, speakers, pre-conference workshops, and program-at-a-glance are available at www.neair.org, as well as information about our host city, Baltimore (Inner Harbor).

Hotel reservations are currently open and can be made now through the conference Web site. NEAIR often sells out the hotel room block, so we recommend that you reserve hotel accommodations as early as possible.

We look forward to seeing you in Baltimore!

Steve Thorpe
2009 Program Chair
swthorpe@widener.edu

Final Call for Proposals for MidAIR 2009 Conference

Proposals are now being accepted for the 29th Annual Conference of the Mid-America Association for Institutional Research (MidAIR), to be held November 11 to 13, 2009, at the Holiday Inn at the Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri. The conference theme "Dynamic Institutional Research in a Time of Uncertainty" should stimulate research, scholarship, and best practices on many topics relating to institutional research, planning, institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes assessment.

Please consider sharing your knowledge and experience by submitting a proposal for a contributed paper you would like to present. The deadline for submitting a proposal is **August 31, 2009**. For more information about presentation formats or to submit your proposal, visit: <http://www.mid-air.org/?page=1660>. To register for the conference go to: <https://secure.airweb3.org/midair/?page=2314>

Hope to see you at the conference!

Carol Sholy
2009 MidAIR Conference Program Chair
sholyc@umsl.edu

ACUI Women's Leadership Institute 2009

Coproduced by ACPA, ACRL, ACUHO-I, ACUI, APPA, NACUBO, NAEP, and NASPA

December 6-9 - Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, Florida

Be a part of a special program for women seeking to become leaders in higher education administration and student affairs. This year's program will have a special focus on the economic challenges facing colleges and universities and what is being done to address it. Through presentations, small group exercises, and discussion, you'll gain a practical understanding of what it takes to be a leader on a college or university campus – both the challenges and the rewards. [Register](#) by September 18th for the Early Bird Rate; regular [registration](#) ends October 30th.

You Will Learn To:

- Effectively utilize key leadership skills: negotiation, communication, introducing and managing change, developing yourself and others, and creating effective work environments
- Develop your greatest strengths and talents through a highly regarded personal assessment tool
- Recognize and appreciate the roles, responsibilities, and perspectives of a broad range of higher education professionals
- Build relationships and improve goal achievement when working with people from across campus
- Help your institution respond successfully to the unique challenges of today

Who Should Participate?

Women who aspire to become senior leaders in higher education. Current responsibilities should include administrative functions that regularly require decision making which impacts departmental operations and involves other important relationships on campus.

Visit <http://www.acui.org/programs/professional/program.aspx?id=10117> for more details about the institute and to register.

Michelle J. Smith
ACUI Director of Educational Programs and Services
mjsmith1@acui.org

Join us at the 2009 American Evaluation Association Annual Conference

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) invites evaluators from around the world to attend its annual conference Wednesday, November 11 - Saturday, November 14, 2009 in Orlando, Florida at the world class Rosen Shingle Creek Resort. AEA's annual meeting is expected to bring together approximately 2500 evaluation practitioners, academics, and students, and represents a unique opportunity to gather with professional colleagues in a supportive, invigorating, environment.

The conference is broken into 41 Topical Strands, which includes 655 sessions over 3.5 days. These sessions examine the evaluation field from the vantage point of a particular methodology, context, or issue of interest as well as the Presidential Strand highlighting this year's Presidential Theme of Context and Evaluation. Presentations may explore the conference theme or any aspect of evaluation theory and practice.

[Register now](#) – discounted, early registration ends September 26. For additional information about the conference or AEA in general, please contact Membership Director Heidi Nye by email at info@eval.org or phone at 888-232-2275/508-748-3326.

Heidi Nye
AEA Membership Director
info@eval.org

Professional Development

AIR 2009 Statistics Webinar Series

The AIR Professional Development Services (PDS) Committee is offering an online professional development webinar series this fall:

"Intermediate Statistical Applications for Institutional Research"

The webinars are limited to 100 participants each. Individuals can register for one or more webinars (AIR members who purchase all three receive a discount). **Last year the Statistics Webinar Series sold out on the first day of AIR member registration.**

Register

Registration opens first for AIR members on Tuesday September 15th at Noon (ET) and for non-members 10 days later on Friday September 25th at Noon (ET). Starting on September 15th registration will be available on the [AIR Web site](#).

Pricing

AIR member: \$125 per webinar (\$350 for all three) – register September 15th at Noon (ET)

*Non-member**: \$175 per webinar (no discount for all three) – register September 25th at Noon (ET)

*Purchase an [AIR membership](#) (\$125) today to register for the complete statistics webinar series at a \$150 discount

Correlation and Regression – the foundation for statistical analysis

Presented by: Robert K. Toutkoushian, Ph.D.

Tuesday, October 13th, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. (ET)

In this webinar, Dr. Toutkoushian will explore the fundamental techniques used to examine the relationships between two or more variables. Participants will learn how to estimate the parameters in a simple regression model; understand the assumptions underlying the model; and examine some of the ways to apply these models in the IR office. Dr. Toutkoushian will also explain more complex models in which more than one independent variable is said to influence the dependent variable (i.e. multiple regression), as well as demonstrate how to expand the regression model framework to examine non-linear functional relationships.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) – powerful statistical tool for a variety of IR applications

Presented by: Robert J. Ploutz-Snyder, Ph.D.

Tuesday, October 27th, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. (ET)

In this webinar, Dr. Ploutz-Snyder will provide participants with the basic tools needed to start using ANOVA. Webinar participants will learn how to use ANOVA to test for differences among three or more groups, and more importantly, learn how to isolate and analyze the effects of multiple independent variables and interactions between two or more independent variables.

Advanced Regression - applications for the IR toolbox

Presented by: Victor M. H. Borden, Ph.D.

Thursday, November 5th, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. (ET)

In this webinar, Dr. Borden will explore the regression techniques that are most appropriate when considering binary groups (e.g., retained, not retained), multiple groups (e.g., chosen major), or percentages (e.g., retention rates). Participants will learn about the special treatment required of multiple regression when looking at many of the outcomes of interest to IR practitioners (many of the tenets of standard Ordinary Least Squares regression is violated in typical IR studies). Dr. Borden will also demonstrate a practical application of probit regression and logistic regression models through exercises that use institutional research datasets and problems.

Information on October 2009 IPEDS Workshops

Topics

- Leading (Managing) an IPEDS Cycle
- IPEDS Data as the Public Face of an Institution
- IPEDS Data and Benchmarking: Supporting Decision Making and Institutional Effectiveness
- Special topics upon request

Format

- Face-to-face training sessions for IPEDS data providers and users
- Taught by [experienced practitioners](#) from across the country
- Includes six hours of instruction, workshop materials, breaks, and lunch

Highlights

- Co-hosted by the Association for Institutional Research ([AIR](#)) and other higher education organizations/units/groups
- Funding provided by the National Center for Education Statistics ([NCES](#))
- Provided at no charge to participants
- Participants may apply for travel assistance awards

October 2009 Workshops

| Co-hosting Organization | Date | Location |
|---|------------|-------------------|
| SAIR - Southern Association for Institutional Research | October 17 | Dallas, TX |
| College Board | October 21 | New York, NY |
| RMAIR - Rocky Mountain Association for Institutional Research | October 21 | Flagstaff, AZ |
| KAIR - Kentucky Association for Institutional Research | October 28 | Lexington, KY |
| AIRUM - Association for Institutional Research of the Upper Midwest | October 28 | Minneapolis, MN |
| HACU - Hispanic Association of College and Universities | October 30 | Disney World®, FL |

For additional information and to apply to attend a workshop, please visit www.airweb.org/ipedsworkshops.

2010 ACT Summer Internship Program for Doctoral Students

ACT annually conducts an 8-week summer internship program for outstanding doctoral students interested in careers related to assessment. The Summer Internship Program provides interns with practical experience through completion of a project, participation in seminars, and direct interaction with professional staff responsible for research and development of testing programs. In 2010, the program will run from June 7 through July 30 at the ACT headquarters in Iowa City, Iowa.

Several internships are offered in Psychometrics and Statistics. Internships are also available in the following applied research areas: educational and workplace research, industrial/organizational psychology, and career and vocational psychology.

Application deadline is February 12, 2010. Applicants must be enrolled in a doctoral program and attending an institution within the U.S. Information and application materials are available at: www.act.org/humanresources/jobs/intern.html You may get further information by e-mail (employment@act.org), by phone (319-337-1763), or by writing to: ACT Summer Internship Program, Human Resources Dept., ACT, 500 ACT Drive, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168.

Jessica Day
ACT 2010 Summer Internship Program Coordinator
jessica.day@act.org

Career Opportunities

AIR Job Listing Summary

Missy Wiggins, AIR Office (mwiggins@airweb.org)

Persons seeking jobs in institutional research, planning, or policy analysis should plan to check the AIR Job Listings web page (<http://www.airweb.org/?page=574>) every few days for new positions. Employers can submit job ads free of charge by using the online submission form found on the AIR Job Openings page (<http://www.airweb.org/?page=2>). For any questions about job ads, please contact Missy Wiggins by email (mwiggins@airweb.org) or phone (850-385-4155 ext. 100).

[REPORT ANALYST - Saint Louis University](#) St. Louis, **MO**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[SENIOR RESEARCH/DATA ANALYST - Cambridge College](#) Cambridge, **MA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - Grayson County College](#) Denison, **TX**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[PROCESS IMPROVEMENT ANALYST - University of North Texas Health Science Center](#) Fort Worth, **TX**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR \(2 positions\) - University of Maryland University College](#) Adelphi, **MD**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[SENIOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST - University of Mary Washington](#) Fredericksburg, **VA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & EFFECTIVENESS - Louisiana State University at Alexandria](#) Alexandria, **LA**

Deadline Date: September 14, 2009

[RESEARCH ANALYST - Bridgewater State College](#) Bridgewater, **MA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[RESEARCH ASSOCIATE FOR ASSESSMENT & INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - Georgia Gwinnett College](#) Atlanta, **GA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & DATA ANALYST - University of Washington](#) Bothell, **WA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH PLANNING & INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS - West Valley-Mission Community College District](#), Santa Clara, **CA**

Deadline Date: September 21, 2009

[DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - Columbus State University](#) Columbus, **GA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DATA MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST - The College of Charleston](#) Charleston, **SC**

Deadline Date: August 31, 2009

[SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING - Tennessee State University](#) Nashville, **TN**

Deadline Date: August 28, 2009

[INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER \(Permanent Full-Time\) & INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE \(2 Positions 24-month Full-Time\) - Ohio University](#), Athens, **OH**

Deadline Date: Positions will remain open until filled. For full consideration apply by September 7, 2009

[RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL 2 - University of Alaska](#) Anchorage, **AK**

Deadline Date: Review Date - August 18, 2009

[DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT - University of New Haven](#) New Haven, **CT**

Deadline Date: September 6, 2009

[DATA ANALYST - University of California](#) Santa Barbara, **CA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ACADEMIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - Ivy Tech Community College](#) Bloomington, **IN**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR \(Federal Contracts Focus\) - Association for Institutional Research](#) Tallahassee, **FL**

Deadline Date: Open until filled (original posting 7/29/09)

[ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR \(Professional Development Focus\) - Association for Institutional Research](#) Tallahassee, **FL**

Deadline Date: Open until filled (original posting 7/24/09)

[ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR - Longwood University](#) Farmville, **VA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ANALYST - Human Capital Research](#) Evanston, **IL**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ACCREDITATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - SUNY Empire State College](#) Saratoga Springs, **NY**

Deadline Date: AUGUST 31, 2009

[ASSESSMENT ANALYST - George Mason University](#) Fairfax, **VA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & EVALUATION - Capital Unity Council](#) Sacramento, **CA**

Deadline Date: AUGUST 6, 2009

[ASSESSMENT & DATA COORDINATOR - Salve Regina University](#) Newport, **RI**

Deadline Date: September 15, 2009

[ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT - Excelsior College Albany, NY](#)

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR OF ASSESSMENT - Morris College Sumter, SC](#)

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS - Triton College, Chicago, IL](#)

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[CHIEF DATA OFFICER - University System of Georgia Atlanta, GA](#)

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[STATISTICIAN - United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime Vienna, Austria](#)

Deadline Date: August 5, 2009

[RESEARCH DIRECTOR - The Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges](#)

Berkeley, CA

Deadline Date: August 20, 2009

[ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/SENIOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - Rochester Institute of Technology](#)

Rochester, NY

Deadline Date: Review of applications will begin 8/10/2009.

[ASSISTANT VP/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING & RESEARCH - Tusculum College Greeneville, TN](#)

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & REPORTING SPECIALIST - West Virginia University Morgantown, WV](#)

Deadline Date: Applications will be accepted until position is filled, but preference will be given to those received by August 1, 2009.

[DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - Cecil College North East, MD](#)

Deadline Date: For best consideration, please apply by July 17, 2009

[ACCREDITATION OFFICER - ECPI College of Technology Virginia Beach, VA](#)

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPER - Columbia College Chicago Chicago, IL](#)

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

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Practitioner Profile

Interview with David Davis-Van Atta

Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu)

In this feature, we summarize the results of an “electronic interview” with an individual institutional research practitioner. Our goal is to foster broader knowledge and appreciation of the diverse membership of AIR, and of the different professional contexts and activities in which we are engaged.

In this issue, we interview David Davis-Van Atta, Director of Institutional Research at Vassar College (ddavisva@vassar.edu).

e-AIR: To start, tell us a bit about your current position.

David: I am Director of Institutional Research for Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY. Vassar is a small (FTE enrollment = 2,400), independent, undergraduate, liberal arts college. It has one of the larger endowments, and is highly selective in its admissions. This is a one-person IR office. I started this position about 1.5 years ago, so it still feels very new to me. But as new as Vassar still is to me, I may be an even newer phenomenon to Vassar. Vassar has never had an Office of Institutional Research per se or a Director of IR, for that matter. So we are both trying to figure each other out! It’s actually quite a process, for each side.

e-AIR: You’ve been responsible for establishing the first centralized IR office at Vassar. What has this entailed?

David: It’s entailed quite a lot. I came here from Carleton College where IR was very well-established. Datasets were plentiful and robust, institutional self-knowledge and understanding was deep and wide, and the college knew and understood IR very well. For the most part, this is not the case at Vassar — at least not yet. My job can be described as working to make all of these things come true here. It sometimes feels like an astronomical effort!

So far, I’ve been engaged in two general types of work. First is what I call the “flour and sugar” work. Before one has any idea what kind of cookies or cake s/he will bake, you know there are just certain ingredients that will be needed such as flour and sugar. In IR terms, these staple ingredients are basic data sets: e.g., detailed faculty information, student data from surveys and institutional files, and comparative data from our peer colleges. At Vassar such data are scattered over many offices, divisions, and functions. But the “pantry shelves” in IR are rather bare; you name the data, and Vassar’s IR office probably doesn’t have it! Or didn’t. I am working to develop these numerous basic informational and analytic resources that every high-functioning IR office requires. I’ve made a lot of progress but there is still a long way to go.

Of course I can’t devote all my time to developing data and systems. The second type of work I do is conducting analytic studies. The President, senior officers, the Board, faculty committees, etc. need information on all manner of topics. And the recent year or so has been a very trying time for higher education. As a result, there have been many decisions here that would benefit from good information. So, I also have been trying as best I can with the resources I have to do these types of studies as well.

It’s a real challenge to do both types of work! Each needs the other. So it is something of a bootstrapping kind of position, like using alternate rungs of a ladder.

e-AIR: You've been at this "creating a new IR office" endeavor for about a year and half now. Are there some accomplishments thus far that you feel particularly good about? What have been some of your greatest challenges?

David: I have developed some very robust systems for analyzing and reporting comparative data between Vassar and its peer colleges. These systems can operate on any sets of data that I drop into them: admissions measures, endowment statistics, enrollment, graduation rates, financial ratios, etc., etc. To date, I have managed to collect and install data for many such measures. The Board is very keen to have a good set of strategic indicators of institutional strengths, weaknesses, and direction. These datasets need a lot more work, but many are done, and the basic systems for them are now fully developed.

I've also installed and begun to use various survey datasets: CIRP Freshman Survey data, Senior Surveys, an Alumni Survey, the HERI Faculty Survey, etc. We had some hardcopy printouts when I arrived, but not a single dataset for a single survey. Here too, there is still a long way to go, but a good start has been made.

IR also has contributed substantively to a number of current questions and problems. One example, which happened within weeks of my arrival, was the issue of whether or not Vassar should eliminate undergraduate student loans from financial aid packaging and replace them with grant aid – a move some of our peer colleges had undertaken. This is an analysis tailor-made for IR. Can we afford to do this? And from a marketplace perspective, can we afford not to? Since then, there have been many other opportunities to conduct good analyses and bring them to the decision table. The Board is very pleased to have IR as a source of information for decision-support. One of them keeps calling me "a rock star" here. Sort of like Mick Jagger, but as a data geek! I like that.

There are many challenges when launching a new office but the biggest one is not related to data, or systems, or anything I've already mentioned. By far the biggest thing is trying to get IR to be visible, known, and well understood at Vassar. Some individuals here definitely "get it" but as an institution, Vassar doesn't really understand yet what IR does or can offer. There is not a culture of turning to IR for information. And there are not active, visible forums for IR to present its work. Changing the institutional culture about data, self-understanding, and analytically-based decision-support has been, and remains, the biggest challenge I've encountered.

e-AIR: Let's step back a bit – what is your academic and professional background? How did you arrive at IR as a profession?

David: I grew up in an academic environment. My father taught experimental psychology at Oberlin and I practically grew up in his lab. By age seven, I was helping with the experiments -- wiring rat mazes and taking data. I was a boy chemist; I did a lot with electricity, magnetism, and then electronics. I seriously frightened my parents a time or two with things I did (e.g., some home rocketry!). I internalized the scientific method well before I even knew it was something already well-developed as a method of understanding, and most important, I acquired an abiding love of science. Eventually, I developed a serious interest in astronomy.

I went to Carleton College and have undergraduate degrees in physics and astronomy. I always figured I'd go to graduate school for a Ph.D. in one of these fields, but life intervened in unexpected ways and I didn't. At some point, it dawned on me that it was too late — the Ph.D. train had already pulled out of the station for me. Fortunately, by that point I was doing IR, and was quite happy with the work!

I worked for Oberlin College first in admissions, developing early computer systems for the office, and doing research on the data they collected. It was some of the earliest research into the college selection

process, and formed the basis for what we now call “enrollment management.” But at that time, we didn’t have names for it. It was, to me, just doing science — research. I got great joy in learning new things, chiefly regarding how prospective students and families go about selecting a college, and Oberlin’s image and position in that process. There were only maybe a dozen people earnestly working on these problems at that time. I was one, and it was great fun, as well as useful work. With Larry Litten, I co-developed the College’s Board’s Admitted Student Questionnaire (the ASQ).

After three years in admissions at Oberlin, I moved into IR. I continued the admissions-related work but slowly broadened into the other areas of the IR function that we all now know as the core parts of the profession. I did a project in the mid-1980’s on the role of liberal arts colleges in the undergraduate stage of the nation’s science pipeline which garnered national attention. This was totally unexpected but great fun. It was my Andy Warhol 15 minutes of fame. There were stories about this work in the New York Times and Washington Post, but for me, the articles in both “Science” magazine and in “Scientific American” were the pinnacle. To someone who loves science, this recognition is about as good as it gets, even if I hadn’t managed to do it in some aspect of physics.

After IR work at Oberlin I did a brief stint in a consulting firm for non-profit marketing and management — just long enough to learn that I did not really love consulting. Fortunately, I was hired away by one of our clients, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute — an acclaimed non-profit biomedical research organization. I worked in their Grants division, and conducted research for their various grant programs, and studying their effectiveness. For a science geek like me, the opportunity to be around that level of science was thrilling. I met seven Nobel Laureates during my time there, including Watson of Watson and Crick, the discoverers of the double-helical structure of DNA. I did two projects working with him on grants to support science education initiatives.

I eventually got an altogether unexpected call from Carleton, my alma mater, about the IR Director position there. I had thought on occasion how good that position would be but never expected this would actually ever happen. I got the job and had 13 excellent years there. Carleton is wonderful school with a long-established IR function, and Northfield, MN was a good place for kids to grow up. I was very fortunate to get the position there and I still miss it greatly.

I then got another unexpected call about IR here at Vassar. It came at a time when our youngest child had gone to college and we were more mobile as a couple. My wife particularly wanted to have “another adventure” before retirement. I knew the new Vassar president, Cappy Hill, from her research and her term as Provost at Williams. I knew she would be a terrific president to work for. I was also attracted by the opportunity to create a new IR function where one had never existed. In some ways, it makes sense to take what one has learned in a professional lifetime of doing IR and try to apply that at a good school that hasn’t had IR. In all likelihood, it will be the final job I do before retirement. If I succeed, I can retire feeling that I’ve accomplished something.

e-AIR: Tell us about some of your interests outside of work.

David: I have always had many more interests than I can really do — particularly outdoorsy activities. I’ve loved cycling all my adult life. I rode a bike home from college (700+ miles) in 1970 long before there were helmets or the idea that you could do such a thing. More recently, I did RAIN, the Ride Across Indiana: a 165 mile, one-day ride. It was exhilarating and I can honestly say that pizza and beer never tasted as good as they did after that ride! I collected butterflies as a kid, and have kept up some of this work as an adult. I don’t do much collection because species levels are so much lower now than they were. I do annual population counts for my region for the North American Butterfly Association. I have developed a love of gardening in the last 10 years that has provided a kind of spiritual side to my life that I never knew before. I had beautiful water gardens in Minnesota (www.flickr.com/photos/DDVA1) but have not yet found ways to garden like this in NY. I raise orchids, I

guess just because I find them so compellingly beautiful. I got captivated by two or three of them maybe seven years ago or so, and now have perhaps 50. They are challenging plants, but very rewarding when (if!) they bloom.

e-AIR: What words of advice would you offer to someone just beginning in IR?

David: Have fun with it. We all have some things that we simply have to do — often a big set of them. But also be sure to pursue some questions that you are curious about — things that seem promising to your institution, and/or to you personally, where the answer is not yet known. Not all these efforts will succeed, but some will. And with those, you will have made some a genuine contribution to your institution and to the field. That is about as good a thing to do as I know. Go for it! Try to preserve 10 percent of your total time for what might be called basic research, exploration into some question where the answer is not known, in addition to the applied work that we all need to do in IR.

Fundamentally, IR for me has been a life in science: research and discovery. That is how I have always approached the work, trying never to come to it from the perspective of some pre-conceived outcome. As simple as that is to say, it's not easy to do. But that's been my approach. And it has allowed me to do in life what I learned to love at an early age. I do miss physics. Astronomy has had what will long be seen as one of its golden ages during my lifetime. I keep up earnest interests in physics and astronomy and lately, in mathematics. I clearly cannot make contributions to the fields, but I can still learn things in them and I like that very much. I can still feel real satisfaction every now and then when I come to understand something I didn't know before.

I wish I could live two lives. I would love to have done work in these scientific fields. But I love what I've gotten to do in IR as well. I would not want to give that up either! Is getting to have two lives too much to ask? I wish it weren't so!

e-AIR: David, thank you so much for participating in this interview!

We welcome your feedback on this feature, including suggestions for individuals to be interviewed and questions you would like to have posed in future interviews. Please e-mail your comments and suggestions to Marne Einarson at mke3@cornell.edu.

Technical Tips

Graded Stoplight Formatting in Excel 2007

Gayle Fink ([Gayle Fink](#))

This corner of the newsletter is reserved for readers to share practical tips, techniques and shortcuts that can make a difference in our work. Send your tips to Gayle Fink (gfink@bowiestate.edu).

This month's Tech Tip is provided by Viktor Brenner, Institutional Research Coordinator, Waukesha County Technical College (vbrenner@wctc.edu). Thanks Viktor!

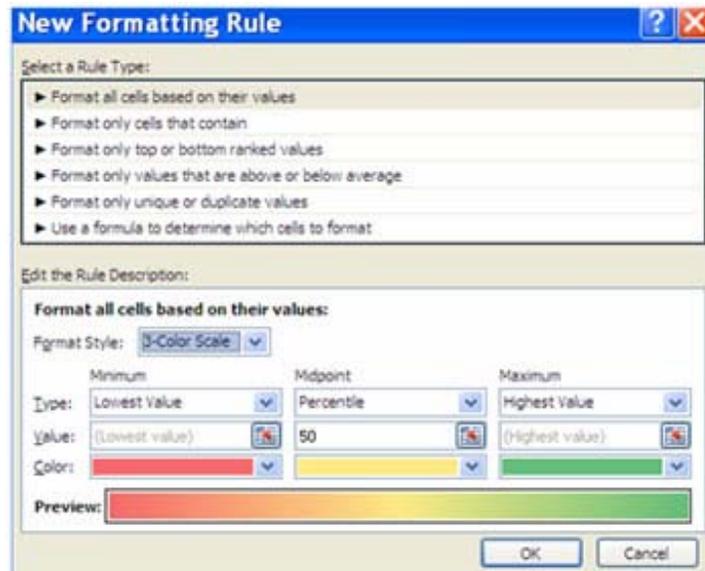
We are all familiar with red/green/yellow stoplight formatting from dashboards. Excel 2007 introduces a new tool that allows you to apply conditional formatting that applies a color gradient *based on the value of the cell*. This allows the color of a cell to reflect performance and produce great impact. Consider the following example of course passing rates:

Green formatting is applied to the highest passing rates, red to the lowest, and color gradations fill in the values in-between.

| Course Number | Course | Passing Rate |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| 10-100-01 | Counting for Beginners | 99% |
| 40-620-99 | Quantum Physics for Beginners | 60% |
| 20-119-20 | Great Writers: Charles Dickens | 78% |
| 20-119-02 | great writers e e cummings | 65% |
| 10-400-11 | Color Theory | 90% |
| 30-511-60 | String Theory | 55% |
| 20-199-10 | Psychology of Tweeting | 84% |
| 20-220-02 | Probability of Coin Flips | 50% |
| 20-840-33 | Exploring Obsolete Media I: Floppy Disks | 72% |
| 20-840-34 | Exploring Obsolete Media II: Cassette Tapes | 82% |
| 10-500-10 | Ethics and Online Behavior | 71% |

To apply this formatting, select the cells you wish to format, then from the "Home" ribbon select "Conditional Formatting" and then "Color Scales." You may already have something like red-yellow-green to choose from, or you can create your own rule by selecting Conditional Formatting>New Rule. You will get an option box that allows you to specify if you want two or three colors, what colors to use, and how to use them.

The formatting above follows this rule (see image on next page).



Using this rule, it is immediately apparent which courses had the highest and which the lowest passing rates—even if readers are not used to understanding numbers!

Here's a note from a reader about last month's Technical Tip, "Fun with the Excel 2007 Format Painter." Bob Daly, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Strategic Academic Research & Analysis, University of California, Riverside (rdaly@ucr.edu), writes:

The Format Painter has been a feature in Office for as long as I can remember, not a new feature in 2007/08. It was definitely in Office 2003/04 and probably in versions before those. But you are right, it is one of the best tools in Office – be it 2003, 2004, 2007, or 2008.

Thanks for the additional information, Bob! Maybe it was the new Ribbon display in 2007 that finally made me take notice of this handy Excel tool. MKE

Parting Thoughts

Parting Thoughts

This quote was submitted by Rana Glasgal, Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Research and Decision Support at Stanford University (rana@stanford.edu). Rana writes, "I found a fun quote about planning in a speech given by Gordon K. Davies at Adelphi University in 2006, titled *Higher Education as if People Matter: American Colleges and Universities in the 21st Century*. Dr. Davies was channeling Yogi Berra (on purpose). I have used this statement frequently in my Reporting Strategy meetings!"

Planning is always difficult, especially when it has to do with the future.

Thanks for sending along this quotation, Rana! Here are a few more thoughts about planning:

In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.
~ Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969), General and 34th President of the United States

A common mistake people make when trying to design something foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools.

~ Douglas Adams (1952-2001), English writer (including *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*), dramatist, and musician

You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there.

~ Yogi Berra (1925-), Major League Baseball player and manager

Reader contributions of Parting Thoughts are most welcome. Send them to Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu).