



# ALAIR

Alabama Association for Institutional Research

Newsletter — August 2005

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From Cara Mia Pugh

Dear Friends,

I have the pleasure, again, of serving on executive committee — this time as your president. I remember past executive committees working hard to build up membership and improve educational opportunities. How rewarding it is to see that ALAIR leadership has continued that effort. ALAIR is a sound organization, leaving this executive committee with the privilege of going beyond growth with the following **initiatives for 2005-06** that will continue to develop the purposes of this group.

1. Continue increasing student involvement by forming alliances with faculty teaching higher education courses in institutional research. An ALAIR member-at-large will be making contact with faculty members, once identified, and we will list these individuals in the ALAIR Directory. Kim Thoma has agreed to coordinate this effort, encouraging student presentations/projects in ALAIR while offering the support of ALAIR in classroom presentations. The ultimate goal is a partnership between higher education graduate programs and ALAIR, thus positively influencing interest in IR as a profession.
2. Improve new member orientation by updating the annual conference newcomer slide presentation and coordinating a listserv of ALAIR newcomers. Robert Gottesman, a newly appointed ALAIR member-at-large, and Michelle Jarrell have agreed to coordinate this initiative.
3. Begin a tradition of an ALAIR sponsored paper or project. Jon Acker and the University of Alabama staff have already distributed an instrument to gather information from high school counselors on the calculation of high school GPA and class rank. The Alabama Counseling Association has encouraged all high school counselors to participate in the survey. Data collected will be used to help with communications between higher education and K-12 organizations concerning admissions data given to Alabama colleges and universities.
4. Increase the use of the ALAIR newsletter with professional development articles.

(continued on p. 2)

### *ALAIR Executive Committee 2005-06*

*President: Cara Mia Pugh  
 Vice President: Sarah Latham  
 Secretary: Jane Mathis-Hopson  
 Treasurer: Linda Lunsford  
 Past President: Kris Mascetti*

### *Members-at-Large:*

*Jon Acker  
 Robert Gottesman  
 Michelle Jarrell*

### *Nominating Committee:*

*Danny Brooks  
 Kim Thoma*

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**Next ALAIR  
 Annual Conference  
 April 6-7, 2006  
 University of Alabama**

*President's Letter (continued from page 1)*

Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to this organization, I believe ALAIR has progressed far beyond meeting resource needs and we are now free to focus attention on challenging projects that will increase the prestige of our association. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of that.

Loyally,  
Cara Mia Pugh

## FAREWELL MESSAGE

From Kris Mascetti

I hope the summer has been a great one for everyone so far. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for placing your trust in me to serve as the 04-05 President of this prestigious organization, and to the many people who made my term as President so enjoyable. It was certainly a professionally challenging experience, and like any challenge, in the end was well worth the work. I couldn't have made it through the year without the fabulous group of people I got to work with; the 04-05 Executive Committee. I'd like to thank them (Dan Tennimon, Cara Mia Pugh, Jane Mathis-Hopson, William Hughes, Matthew Campbell, Anthony Hardy, Linda Lunsford, Yardley Bailey, and Kim Jones) for their dedication, hard work, and positive attitude this past year. I enjoyed getting to know you all. Thanks to them, and others, we achieved the initiatives set forth at the beginning of the term.

The state conference in April 2005 was a huge success. Congratulations are extended to Cara Mia Pugh, Linda Lunsford, and Anne Strickland for a successful and professionally enriching ALAIR conference. The one-day winter workshop (Scorecards as Performance Indicators), was extremely successful thanks to the work of several people, most especially Jane Mathis-Hopson, Michelle Hower, and Mary Beth Adams.

## SUTTON AWARD PRESENTED TO JANIS C. LOWTHER

At the April ALAIR Conference in Fairhope, Janis Colee Lowther, recently retired after 23 years with the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in Montgomery, was presented with the 2005 Joseph P. Sutton Award. The purpose of this award is "to recognize Alabamians who have demonstrated leadership and outstanding accomplishment in the field of institutional research and related fields." The award is intended to be a "meaningful recognition of those individuals who have provided exemplary service and leadership and who have actively supported and enhanced the goals of ALAIR."



In his presentation of the Sutton Award, Past President Dan Tennimon noted that Janis "always stepped [up] to the plate when there was a job to be done [in ALAIR]. Janis treasures the years she worked for Dr. Sutton when both were at ACHE, and it was particularly poignant this year to have both Mrs. Sutton and the Suttons' son, Bill, present when the award was made to Janis at the annual conference business meeting.

Another goal set for the past term was to create an ALAIR historical record to be maintained on the association website; this included the addition of such things as the minutes, conference brochures, and information on workshops held. Thanks again to Matt Campbell and Sam Lowther for making this happen. In addition, the Online Resource Directory was updated and a new database system was created that joins it with the treasurer's database. A special thank you is extended to Regina Eady for all her hard work creating and updating this new system.

These are only a few examples of the many things the ALAIR members have done over the last year to contribute to the organization. It has been a great experience working with so many talented people who are willing to give of their time. I enjoyed serving as President, and thank you for the privilege. I strongly encourage you all to get involved with the organization, and I look forward to hearing from you over the next year on the Sutton Award, nominations for officers, and travel grants.

Kris R. Mascetti  
Auburn University at Montgomery

# Annual Conference Held April 7-8, 2005 in Fairhope "Off to a Good Start"

ALAIR's 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference, which was held at the Faulkner State Community College campus in Fairhope, was a huge success. Approximately 60 Institutional Research personnel enjoyed the two day conference. The workshop on Thursday, An Aspirational and Measurement Model for the First Year of College, by Randy L. Swing (Policy Center on the First Year of College, by Randy L. Swing (Policy Center on the First Year of College) was very informative. The Friday morning speaker, Dr. Phil Kimrey (Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, Samford University), discussed 'Using Data to Select New Students for Success.' Friday there were two sets of three concurrent sessions to choose from, as well as three informative Tools and Techniques sessions. Our thanks to all who participated and special thanks to Linda Lunsford and Anne Strickland, the Faulkner State Community College local arrangements team.



Charming Dahlgren Hall was the location for conference registration, breaks, and Tools and Techniques.



Randy Swing, Policy Center on the First Year of College, spoke on Thursday.



Dr. Philip Kimrey of Samford University spoke Friday about "Using Data to Select New Students for Success."



General sessions, concurrent sessions, and the business meeting were held in beautiful Centennial Hall.



Bill Fendley and Hannelore Delbride (UA) and Mary Beth Adams (UAB) network between sessions.



Faulkner State's student group, Sun Chief Sound, entertained ALAIR with Jimmy Buffett music as we prepared for lunch on the campus lawn.

Thursday night's dinner at the Yardarm Restaurant on Mobile Bay provided a great opportunity to catch up with professional colleagues and friends from around the state.



## FOLLOW-UP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF FIRST YEAR PROGRAM

At our last ALAIR annual conference in Fairhope, Dr. Randy Swing, from the Policy Center on the First Year of College, presented a program called *Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year*. *Foundations of Excellence* is designed to help colleges and universities measure their effectiveness in recruiting, admitting, housing, orienting, supporting, advising and teaching new students. Several members of our conference audience at the conference interest in making contact with campuses that have implemented the program presented by Dr. Swing and in hearing from actual practitioners of the program. Two such contacts have been found: Middle Tennessee State University and Georgia Southwestern College.

Middle Tennessee State University began participating in the First year of College project through *Foundations of Excellence* in April 2003. Associate VP for Academic Support Services Dr. Debra Sells is listed as the contact for the program on campus. Dr. Sells says one of the strengths of this program for their campus has been the wealth of information that was gathered by the task force concerning campus services for first year students. The resulting collection of information provided evidence of how disjointed campus services had been. The task force found that MTSU had numerous services for first year students that had not been well coordinated. In some incidents, it became evident that even faculty and staff were not aware of services. The campus is currently investigating a plan to provide comprehensive advising centers for all first year students. Immediate changes also occurred at MTSU, such as expanded hours of advising and increased sharing of information with other departments.

This extensive capture of information concerning campus services came at a time that the entire campus was also involved in larger discussions (in their Vice Provost Council) concerning a campus-wide comprehensive retention plan. Dr. Sells reports that there seemed to be a synergy when the two efforts came together on campus, and that is making preparation for change much easier and more exciting.

Middle Tennessee State offers a web site with a detailed description of their efforts, including an inventory of their current practices for first year students, surveys used, the resulting benchmarks, and a final report of an evaluation of their services for first-year students. This can be found at: <http://www.mtsu.edu/~stuaff/foundations/index.htm>

Another resource is Dr. Lisa Cooper, Director of Institutional Research at Georgia Southwestern State University. GSW has made many changes in services for first year students, including a live and learn residence hall for freshmen, reserved freshmen seating in core courses, and providing freshmen advocates. She notes that "a number of the recommendations that resulted from our participation in the Foundations project were focused specifically on reports provided by the IR office" (e.g., retention reports and locally-developed and -administered new student surveys). Dr. Cooper had graciously agreed to present their experience at GSW to ALAIR last April had we not been able to secure the presentation by Dr. Swing. She would be a great resource to any IR professionals considering implementing the program through the Policy Center for the First Year of College. Dr. Cooper can be reached at: [lcooper@canes.gsw.edu](mailto:lcooper@canes.gsw.edu).

Contact information for the Policy Center is at: <http://www.fyfoundations.org>.

### 2005 BEST PAPER AWARD TO LANGLEY AND LOWTHER

The ALAIR Awards Committee is pleased to announce that Jonathan Langley and Sam Lowther, both of Auburn University, have received the 2005 Best Paper Award for their presentation on "First Year Retention: Is It Housing or Affiliation that Matters?" at the 2005 ALAIR conference in Fairhope. The paper will be submitted as ALAIR Best Paper for the 2006 AIR Forum in New Orleans, and the award carries with it a stipend to cover partial travel expenses to the AIR conference. Congratulations, Jonathan and Sam!

*Draft for Approval by Membership at 2006 Conference Business Meeting***ALABAMA ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH**

2005 Annual ALAIR Business Meeting

Faulkner State Community College

Fairhope, AL

Friday, April 8, 2005

The Business Meeting was called to order by President Kris Reed Mascetti at 1:10 PM in Centennial Hall Auditorium. President Mascetti welcomed all new ALAIR members and Mrs. Frances Sutton and her son Bill. She thanked host institution Faulkner State Community College and Linda Lunsford, Ann Strickland, and Brian Strickland. She also expressed gratitude to Program Chair Cara Mia Pugh for her extensive efforts on this conference. President Mascetti introduced the Executive Committee and thanked them for their commitment to ALAIR during the 2004-05 year and especially during this conference. A special thank you to outgoing member Dan Tennimon, who has served on the Executive Committee for five consecutive years.

Minutes from the Business Meeting at the 2004 Conference at UAB were presented by Secretary Jane Mathis-Hopson. With no changes proposed, Hannelore Delbridge moved and Mimi Johnson seconded the motion that the minutes be approved as distributed. Motion passed and the minutes were approved.

Treasurer Billy Hughes presented the Treasurer's Report, noting that the final entry under the heading "Checking Account" should be listed as credit, not a debit. The corrected current checking account balance is \$6,227.25 and the corrected total cash on hand balance is \$9,393.24 (before payment of conference bills).

Matthew Campbell moved and Yardley Bailey seconded the motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as amended. Motion passed. A corrected copy of the Report is included with these minutes.

Cara Mia Pugh announced that 68 persons had registered for this conference. She thanked Linda Lunsford and Ann Strickland of Faulkner State for their hard work hosting the conference.

President Mascetti reported to the membership on several items of new business. The ALAIR website is current, with new information being added including Executive Committee and Annual Business Meeting minutes, links to regional workshops and materials, links to conference programs (with further links to PowerPoint presentations), and Best Paper/Presentation links. Kris thanked Matt Campbell and Sam Lowther for all their work adding these new items to the website, with special thanks to Sam for his ongoing work as ALAIR webmaster, an unofficial position which doesn't end as do the Executive Committee members' terms! In other new business, President Mascetti thanked Regina Eady for creating and updating the new online Directory system, with the help of Sam Lowther and Jonathan Langley.

Past President Dan Tennimon expressed thanks to Yardley Bailey and Kim Brinkley-Jones, members of the Nominating/Awards Committee. He then presented the 2005-05 slate of officers for approval by the membership. The slate consists of the following nominees:

Vice President / President-Elect - Dr. Sarah Latham (Samford University)

Treasurer - Ms. Linda Lunsford (Faulkner State Community College)

Nominating Committee - Mr. Tim Smith (Jacksonville State University)

Ms. Kim Thoma (University of Alabama System).

There being no nominations from the floor, the motion to accept the proposed slate of officers was made by Robert Gottesman and seconded by Bill Fendley. The motion passed and the slate was approved.

Dan noted the most recent recipients of the ALAIR Travel Grants. Elizabeth Lilley (Troy State University) was awarded the ALAIR Travel Grant to SAIR last summer and attended the Biloxi SAIR conference in the fall; she has since moved out of Alabama. Jon Acker (University of Alabama) was awarded the ALAIR Travel Grant to AIR and will travel to the AIR Forum in San Diego, CA May 29-June 1, 2005.

*2005 Conference Business Meeting Minutes (cont.)*

Recipients of the award for Best Presentation at the ALAIR 2004 Conference, whose names were announced in the August 2004 newsletter, were Mimi Johnson (H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College) and Andrea Agnew (Bishop State Community College). Their paper, entitled "Moving through the Maze of Program Evaluation: A Theoretical Approach to Evaluating a Retention Program", will be presented at the 2005 AIR Forum in San Diego, CA. Mimi was presented her certificate by Dan Tennimon (Andrea was not present).

Before Dan presented the 2005 Sutton Award, Kris made some remarks about Dr. Sutton, summarizing his long and rich career in Institutional Research and noting what a model and mentor he was to many ALAIR members past and present. She then introduced Mrs. Sutton, who noted how pleased and happy she and her son, Bill, were to be present at this year's conference.

Dan then presented the 2005 Sutton Award to Janis Colee Lowther, recently retired from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. Dan and Bill Sutton presented Janis with an engraved plaque and photos were taken.

After the Sutton Award presentation, Kris presented Mrs. Sutton a basket of flowers as a token of esteem and appreciation from ALAIR.

Dan Tennimon then presented President Mascetti with the traditional ALAIR gift to outgoing presidents: an engraved wooden box.

Robert Gottesman gave a brief PowerPoint talk encouraging ALAIR members to attend the 2005 AIR Forum in San Diego, CA May 29-June 1, 2005. May 3 is the early registration deadline. There are six program tracks, and details are available at [www.airweb.org](http://www.airweb.org).

Cathy Tanner talked about the 2005 SAIR Conference, to be held October 22-25, 2005 at the Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston, SC. Jim Eck, former ALAIR president, is Program Chair. Proposal deadline is May 9, 2005. Detailed information is available at [www.sair.org](http://www.sair.org).

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 PM, after which a drawing for door prizes (contributed by many attending schools) was held.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Mathis-Hopson  
ALAIR Secretary 2004-06

**HOLD THIS DATE!!**

JANUARY 27, 2006  
ALAIR ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

Harriott Calhoun and Tammie Richey have begun to make arrangements for this event, to be held on the Shelby Campus of Jefferson State Community College (Valleydale Road, south of Birmingham). Sarah Latham is developing the topic of "The SACS Quality Enhancement Plan: Developing a Topic Incorporating the Campus and Evaluating It According to SACS Criteria." Dr. John Harris will be one of the facilitators. You'll receive more detailed information in the fall, but **MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!**

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TRANSITION MEETING HELD AT AUBURN

The old and new ALAIR Executive Committee members met at Auburn University on May 24 for the annual Transition Meeting. Present at the meeting were outgoing president Kris Mascetti (AUM) and incoming president Cara Mia Pugh (Auburn); outgoing past-president Dan Tennimon (Troy State); incoming vice-president and 2006 conference program chair Sarah Latham (Samford); continuing secretary Jane Mathis-Hopson (UAB); outgoing member-at-large/incoming treasurer Linda Lunsford (Faulkner State CC); outgoing member-at-large Matt Campbell (Auburn); incoming nominating committee member Jon Acker (UA); outgoing nominating committee members Yardley Bailey and Kim Brinkley-Jones, and incoming nominating committee member Kim Thoma.

Since the Transition meeting, incoming member-at-large Rick Axelson (South Alabama) has taken a job out of state, and president Pugh has named Robert Gottesman (Auburn) to replace him. Incoming nominating committee members Tim Smith (Jacksonville State) has also left the state, and Danny Brooks (Birmingham-Southern) has been named as his replacement on the committee.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for September 19 at UAB.

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Martha Banks, Northeast Alabama CC  
 Kaye F. Brown, University of Mobile  
 Dr. Mike Conerly, University of Alabama (College of Business)  
 Deb Finan, SAS  
 Dr. Mike Hardin, University of Alabama  
 Griena H. Knight, Miles College  
 Jonathan Langley, Auburn  
 Elaine B. Lavender, University of West Florida  
 Dr. John McIntosh, Northwest-Shoals CC  
 Roderick McSwain, Bishop State CC  
 Daniel Peck, University of South Alabama  
 Brett Perlman, SAS  
 Sherrell Price, Alabama A&M University  
 Julianna Proctor, University of Alabama  
 Donna Sanders, Troy University  
 Jerry D. Smith, National Student Clearinghouse  
 Dr. Judy L. Snyder, Enterprise-Ozark CC  
 Jane T. Williams, Huntingdon College  
 Arlene Wimbley, Oakwood College



## 2004 BEST PAPER PRESENTED AT AIR IN SAN DIEGO

Mimi Johnson (Trenholm State) and Andrea Agnew (Bishop State), winners of the ALAIR's 2004 Best Paper Award, presented their paper, "Moving through the Maze of Program Evaluation: A Theoretical Approach to Evaluating a Retention Program" at the 2005 AIR Forum in San Diego in May. Mimi is pictured, above, receiving her award from Dan Tennimon at the Fairhope conference.

## OTHER MEMBER NEWS

Rick Axelson, USA, has moved to the University of Missouri at Kansas City, where he is Assistant Vice Provost.  
 Tim Smith, formerly of Jacksonville State, is working outside higher education in Central Florida.  
 Matt Campbell is back at Auburn as Institutional Research.

## DON'T MISS SAIR IN CHARLESTON THIS FALL!

By now you have received your registration information in the mail from Jim Eck, SAIR 2005 Program Chair. We hope you've already sent in your registration and made your hotel reservations, because the regional IR conference is always well worth your time and your institution's money. There's a full schedule of pre-conference workshops and conference sessions, and there'll even be an ALAIR meeting on Monday morning at 7:30.

See you in Chawst'n **October 22-25!**