



Alabama Association for Institutional Research

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NEWSLETTER

September 14, 1990

ALABAMA ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 24, 1991
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
FERGUSON CENTER

SAIR/SCUP CONFERENCE--Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 1990 Southern Association for Institutional Research and Society for College and University Planning conference. The conference is slated for October 10-12, 1990 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Conference registration information is located on the last page of this newsletter.

Several important workshops are scheduled, including developing a student tracking system, institutional effectiveness, conducting a graduate survey, and others.

ALAIR LEADERSHIP FOR 1990-91

The following list indicates those persons who have accepted leadership positions in ALAIR this year. If you have ideas about the organization, please contact these persons and share your thoughts with them.

President:

Dr Kitty C. Collier
Director of Planning
Alabama Commission on Higher Education
269-2700

Alabama

Vice President:

Mr. Don Dailey
Director of Health
Affairs,
Planning & Projects
University of
at Birmingham
934-3405

Secretary/Treasurer:

Dr. James E. Carlson

Director, Planning, Information Analysis, & Computing Services
Auburn University at Montgomery
244-3281

Members at Large:

Dr. Harriott D. Calhoun

Director of Institutional Research
Jefferson State Community College
853-1200

Mr. Ronald E. Estridge

Director of Planning and Research
Southern Union State Junior College
395-2211, Ext. 141

Dr. Myrtes Green

Director of Institutional Research and Planning
Stillman College
349-4240

Immediate Past President:

Mrs. Debbie Dailey

Assistant Director, Institutional Research
University of Alabama at Birmingham
934-3254

Nominating Committee:

Mrs. Brenda Bryant

Director, Institutional Research/MIS
Alabama State University
293-4431

Dr. Julia S. Rogers

Director of Academic Research
University of Montevallo
665-6110

Newsletter Editor:

Dr. Judith G. Miller

Director of Institutional Research
Enterprise State Junior College
347-2623, Ext. 310

CARLSON APPOINTED SECRETARY/TREASURER

The Executive Committee has appointed **Jim Carlson** as Secretary/Treasurer of **ALAIR** for 1990-91. **Carlson** replaces **Richard Middaugh** who had been elected to the position last April. **Middaugh** resigned his office when he accepted the position of Director of Institutional Research at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas during the summer.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by **Kitty C. Collier**

When the 1990-91 Executive Committee met in early August, we agreed to promote five goals for ALAIR during its fifth year of existence. Many of these goals are not new, but do represent a continuation of several important initiatives set into motion by previous ALAIR leadership. I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their willingness to support these goals and to accept responsibility for implementing them. If you have ideas about these goals or other directions you would like to see ALAIR take, share your thoughts with any member of the Executive Committee. We may not be able to address all concerns, but we will try our best to respond in every way possible.

Goals for 1990-91

1. Communicate with ALAIR membership on a more regular basis.

To accomplish this goal, we have already distributed a copy of the Constitution and revised Bylaws to members. In addition, we will publish at least two newsletters and print and distribute an information directory immediately following the annual meeting which will include a brief history of the organization, a list of new officers, a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws, and names, addresses, and phone numbers of members.

2. Implement a process for retaining historical records of the organization.

Since ALAIR is a relatively new organization, now is the time to establish a process for preserving its records. **Sam Lowther**

has made an initial contact with the Auburn University Archives Department and they have indicated an interest in retaining our records. **Harriott Calhoun** has agreed to pursue this idea, and by the end of the year, we hope to have a regular process in place for annually submitting information to the Archives. In addition, **Debbie Dailey** has agreed to compile a brief narrative history of ALAIR and to work on compiling a complete set of records for the initial submission to the Auburn University Archives. If you have any early ALAIR records, including photographs, please contact **Debbie Dailey**.

3. Provide professional development opportunities for members.

To target the program of the annual meeting to the interests and needs of ALAIR members, **Don Dailey** will be conducting a survey on program topics and formats in early Fall. We encourage you to participate in this survey and to share ideas about how the program could be most meaningful to you. **Harriott Calhoun** will be working closely with **Don Dailey** in planning the program. **Ron Estridge** has also agreed to develop a proposal for a travel grant program to assist an ALAIR member to attend the annual 1991 SAIR meeting.

4. Continue to conduct the affairs of the organization on a sound financial basis.

Due to sound management practices of previous leadership, ALAIR is in good financial condition, and the Executive Committee plans to maintain that standing. As is customary, we will continue to plan the annual conference to be self-supporting. In addition, **Jim Carlson** has agreed to accept responsibility for filing necessary paperwork for tax exempt status of the organization.

5. Increase awareness about ALAIR, including its functions and benefits.

To aid in disseminating information about ALAIR, the Executive Committee decided to develop a membership brochure. This document will include information about membership eligibility and benefits and will be mailed to all persons who inquire about the organization. **Myrtes Green** and **Al Searway** have already prepared several drafts of the brochure, and we are optimistic that the final document will be ready by the first of the year.

Minutes of
ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
Business Meeting, April 26, 1990

Ms. Debbie Dailey, ALAIR President convened the business meeting at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama on Thursday, April 26, 1990. **Dr. Judy Miller**, Secretary-Treasurer, read the minutes from the 1989 business meeting. A motion by **Mary Beth Bridges** and a second by **Teresa Weaver** to accept the minutes was passed. The treasurer's report, distributed in each member's packet, was approved as presented.

Debbie Dailey presented the proposed amendment to the bylaws which provided a change to elect, rather than appoint, the nominating committee. A motion by **Julia Rogers** and a second by **Don Dailey** to accept the amendment was passed.

Harriott Calhoun reported for the Nominating Committee and presented the committee's proposed set of officers for 1990-91: **Vice President/President-Elect and Program Chair for the 1991 Conference:**

- (1) **Don Dailey**, Director of Health Affairs Planning at UAB
- (2) **Myrtes Green**, Director of Institutional Research and Planning at Stillman College

Secretary-Treasurer:

- (1) **Jim Carlson**, Director of Planning, Information Analysis, and Computer Services, Auburn University at Montgomery
- (2) **Richard Middaugh**, Associate Director for Institutional Research and Planning, University of South Alabama

Nominating Committee

- (1) **Brenda Bryant**, Director of Institutional Research and Management Information Systems--Alabama State University
- (2) **Sam Lowther**, Associate Director, Planning and Analysis--Auburn
- (3) **Jim Natale**, Bessemer State Technical College
- (4) **Julia Rogers**, Director of Academic Research--University of Montevallo

Written ballots were distributed to those members in attendance, and the ballots collected and counted by **Delmer Duboise**, **Karen Freeman**, and **Janet Morgan**.

ALAIR President, **Debbie Dailey**, made a "State of the Association Address" in which she stressed the importance of the organization in advancing institutional research and in the continuation of professional development. She also thanked the Executive Committee members for their work and the Auburn local arrangements committee.

Dr. Kitty Collier, Vice-President/President Elect encouraged the group to complete their evaluation forms so that the Executive Committee would have ideas for planning the coming year's meeting. She stated that the ALAIR conference for 1991 would be at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Janet Morgan reported on the results of the election:

Vice-President/President Elect: Don Dailey
Secretary/Treasurer: Richard Middaugh
Nominating Committee: Brenda Bryant
Julia Rogers

A motion by **Susan Cagle** and seconded by **Janis Colee** that the business meeting adjourn carried.

Dr. Joseph T. Sutton, Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education presented the keynote address, "Institutional Research as an Attitude." Upon completion of his talk, **Debbie Dailey** presented him with a plaque from the Association, honoring **Dr. Sutton** for his contribution to the field of institutional research.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Miller
Secretary-Treasurer

NOTICE . . .

The next ALAIR newsletter will be published in late January/early February 1991. If you have items for the newsletter, please send them to the **Newsletter Editor: Dr. Judy Miller**, Director of Institutional Research, Enterprise State Junior College, P. O. Box 1300, Enterprise, AL 36331 (347-2623, Ext. 310) or FAX to 306.

UPDATE ON SCUP . . .

The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) has as its goal the development of planning to improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions and agencies. Its programs and activities are aimed at improving the planning capabilities of all who have responsibilities and interests in that area, including faculty, administrators, and students.

Activities give special attention to planning in the areas of academic affairs; facilities; budgets, resources, and development; and institutional governance and policy. In addition to an annual international conference and regional workshops, conferences, and newsletters, SCUP publishes Planning for Higher Education, a

quarterly journal of refereed articles on planning which is edited by George Keller. SCUP-25, the annual meeting of the Society, was held in Atlanta, July 29 - August 1, 1990. SCUP-26 will take place in Seattle on July 14-17, 1991.

- . The South Central Region of SCUP will serve as a co-sponsor of the SAIR/SCUP Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, October 10-12, 1990. The region, along with the Southeast Region, also sponsors an annual facilities related conference in February/March. Some sessions at this conference provide basic information on space and facilities planning for those who find themselves with responsibilities in this area but need more information and assistance.

Al Searway of JSU serves as the Program Coordinator for the South Central Region of SCUP. **Myrtes Green** of Stillman College is State Coordinator for Alabama. Both are also ALAIR members. For additional information about SCUP and its activities, please contact either of these people or **Glenna Brown** at UAB who is SCUP South Central Regional Representative (934-2384).

ALAIR WILL MEET AT SAIR/SCUP

As is customary, ALAIR will hold a state meeting during the SAIR/SCUP meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, October 10-12, 1990. Tentatively, the state meetings have been scheduled on Friday morning--as Continental Breakfast Roundtables--from 7:30- 8:30 a.m. Check your conference program for final details.

1990-91 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES AVAILABLE

The 1990-91 Membership Directories for **ALAIR** were distributed at the Annual Meeting in Auburn in April 1990. If you did not receive your copy or if you would like another copy, please contact **Kitty Collier** (Alabama Commission on Higher Education, Suite 221, One Court Square, Montgomery, AL 36197-0001--269-2700).

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS . . .

--**Elizabeth Cooper** recently participated in a week-long international Leadership Seminar sponsored by Nova University in Fort Lauderdale, FL. **Cooper** introduced the speaker for one of the sessions.

--Congratulations to **Teresa Weaver Hall** who was married to Doug Hall in July.

A STUDY OF THE STATUS AND CAREER OPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS
(PHASE ONE)

by Edwin R. Smith, West Virginia University and Larry Jones, University of Georgia

Note: This paper was presented at the 30th Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research at Louisville, Kentucky on May 16, 1990, and is reprinted by permission of the authors.

Purpose

This study investigated the professional status, appropriate education and training, and advantages and disadvantages of professional certification for institutional research professionals. A program of professional development activities to enhance the competence, professional standing, and professional visibility of institutional researchers is recommended.

Nature of the Research

The research framework was descriptive survey (Leedy, 1980)¹ utilizing structured interviews. This report, the first of two phases of the study, is limited to the analysis of twelve interviews conducted by the investigators during the spring of 1990. The second phase, the distribution and analysis of a questionnaire, will be conducted during the summer of 1990 and reported at a later date.

Background:

One of the imperatives in the new Criteria for accreditation or reaffirmation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is the regular evaluation of the institutional research (IR) function.² While it is not the intent of the Criteria to directly evaluate the institutional researcher, the review of the IR function inevitably will be an evaluation of the professional skills of those conducting institutional research.

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) lists as one of its statements of purposes, "to further the professional development and training of individuals engaged in institutional research and analysis, or interested in its utilization in planning, management, and resource allocation and in the improvement of post-secondary education."³

Jones,⁴ in a paper presented at the 1988 forum of the Southern AIR, suggested that it would be desirable if the professional development programs of AIR included professional certification of institutional researchers as a means of providing professional peer evaluation in support of the evaluation required by SACS.

This research extends Saunders' work⁵ as it attempts to discover what university executive officers expect from institutional research professionals rather than their current institutional research responsibilities.

The researchers are particularly interested in how the Association for Institutional Research, through its professional development, can assist in helping present and future institutional researchers achieve their maximum professional potential both within the profession and in other higher education administrative positions.

A better understanding of the perceived professional status of IR and institutional researchers within the institution and higher education is needed to provide appropriate professional development programs and to evaluate institutional research at the institutional level. The manner in which institutional research and institutional researchers are viewed by senior executives at colleges and universities will, in fact, influence who does the research, what is done in the name of institutional research, how effectively institutional research is done, and what is done with the research once it has been completed. Clearly, these perceptions will also influence the career paths of those doing institutional research in higher education.

Research Objectives:

1. To assess the credibility, viability, visibility, centrality, importance, stature, and status of institutional research within the institution as perceived by senior administrators (e.g., Presidents/Chancellors, Chief Academic Officers, College Deans, and College and University Administrators).
2. To determine the professional status of institutional researchers as perceived by senior administrators.
3. To identify the competencies and experiences senior administrators perceive as significant for institutional researchers and for senior level higher education administrators.
4. To determine the experiences and training (e.g., professional certification, etc.) which would enhance perceptions of institutional research and/or institutional researchers for senior administrators, and to recommend to the AIR a program of professional development by which its members could become better prepared for positions of increased responsibility in IR and within the institution.

Benefits of the Study:

Based on the results of this study the Association for Institutional Research should be more prepared to:

1. Aid in the career development of institutional researchers by providing additional professional services (workshops, certification, professional code of ethics).
2. Assess the "status of the profession," and respond with appropriate programs and policies to enhance the profession and the status of

- IR on campuses.
3. Identify institutional characteristics, policies, and programs which will enhance the successful integration of institutional research, and institutional researchers into institutional decision-making, and
 4. Counsel current and prospective institutional researchers on career possibilities within the profession.

Research Activities:

Two primary data gathering activities will be used to address these objectives.

1. Focused interviews with a selected group of senior level administrators, and
2. A mail survey of senior higher education administrators selected for their knowledge and experience of the role and status of institutional research and institutional researchers in colleges and universities.

The interviews and surveys will be conducted with senior level administrators who currently have or have previously had an opportunity to work with institutional research first hand, including some who at one time in their career have served as Directors of Institutional Research offices. These persons will be chosen with the help of the executive committee of the AIR.

Investigators:

Edwin R. Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Education Administration, West Virginia University

Larry Jones, Associate Director, Office of Institutional Research & Planning, University of Georgia

Interview Procedures:

Personal interviews were conducted with twelve senior administrators at US and Canadian institutions of higher education. The persons who were interviewed were identified by members of the AIR executive committee. The interviews were conducted with one chief executive officer of a system, the provost of a large state system, six presidents of four year institutions, and four presidents of two year institutions. Of the ten interviews, nine were with US institutions and one was at a Canadian college. A second Canadian interview was scheduled and cancelled, due to the sudden illness of the president after the interviewer had arrived in Canada. Because of budget constraints the interview was not rescheduled. The four year institutions included one major state flagship university, one comprehensive state university, one private church related university and one private independent college. The two year institutions included three community colleges and one branch of a large state university. Geographically, the ten

interviews were conducted in New York (2), California (2), Alabama, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Washington, British Columbia, West Virginia, Illinois, and Maryland. Interviews were conducted with two female presidents and one black male president. The remainder were white males.

Interviews, scheduled for one and one-half hours, used the structured interview technique (Leedy, 1980). Ten interviews were tape recorded. A sample interview guide is found in appendix one. [Appendix One was not included.]

Each of the four research questions were addressed during the interviews. As interviews progressed, attempts were made to draw out the interviewees and follow-up questions were made to expand upon various aspects of the previous determined questions. Upon conclusion of the interviews the tape recordings were individually transcribed. When all interviews were completed and transcribed, the responses were summarized according to each of the research questions (appendix two) [Appendix Two was not included].

During the second step in the research process as described by Leedy, the summarized responses to each research question were further compared and contrasted for elements of uniqueness and commonality. These summaries resulted in several conclusions or "lessons learned" from the executive interviews.

Findings:

Research Question One: To assess the credibility, viability, visibility, centrality, importance, stature, and status of institutional research within the institution as perceived by senior administrators (e.g., Presidents/Chancellors, Chief Academic Officers, College Deans and College and University Administrators).

1. The status of institutional research on most campuses is good but stereotyped.
2. As a career institutional research has limited upward mobility without faculty experience, credentials, and credibility.
3. Institutional research is viewed, with very few exceptions, as strictly a staff function.
4. A thorough understanding of the academic culture is essential to success in academic administration. The "understanding" must come from faculty experience, and not "staff" or "administrative" experience.
5. On small enrollment campuses institutional research personnel have multiple responsibilities.
6. The deeper into the organization the Institutional Research Office is located the more likely the office is doing traditional numbers crunching studies.
7. Successful Institutional Research Offices market their products and services to the academic community. The more faculty oriented the service the more creditable the perception of the product.
8. Institutional Research Offices which report to the President or

Academic-Vice President generally have more influential roles than those offices with other reporting lines.

Research Question Two: To determine the professional status of institutional researchers as perceived by senior administrators.

1. Opportunity to spend time in an academic department is most helpful to a career in academic administration. Faculty identity is necessary for socialization into the "fraternity" of higher education. Faculty rank is always helpful never harmful. It is less creditable unless the person is tenured.
2. Upward mobility of institutional research professionals is limited. Doctorate degree is essential for any upward mobility. Institutional research is not a good route to a presidency or academic administration.
3. Salary considerations, especially at community colleges and small liberal arts colleges, may preclude the institutional research officer holding the terminal degree. Institutions can hire the institutional research talent they need for less than they would pay a faculty member. Another alternative is to appoint a part-time institutional research person from the faculty than to "buy" the same credibility in the higher education research market.
4. Institutional Research is a good short term position. The institutional research officer must not become stereotyped if their career interest is in academic administration. Titles are important! Reporting lines are important.
5. The ability to interpret data will differentiate between a technician and a full member of the management team. The faculty credential and experience will allow a data interpreter to become a full member of the management team.

Research Question Three: To identify competencies and experiences senior level administrators perceive as significant for institutional researchers and for senior level higher education administrators.

1. The institutional research officer should avoid being stereotyped as a numbers cruncher. Close association with a faculty will help prevent this. Policy considerations should be made even in they are not requested. Data are means not ends. The difference between data and information must be learned.
2. The institutional research officer should study the strategic problems of the institution, e.g.: the measurement of quality education. The officer should know his/her institution and the problems unique to it. Institutional research should involve others in interpreting and explaining the results of studies.
3. An understanding of the decision making process, an understanding of what decisions the senior staff are facing and the development of data to help solve these problems are required. Institutional Research personnel must make themselves valuable by informing and influencing the decision making process.
4. Human relations skills are most important to Institutional Research personnel who wish to advance in higher education administration.

Since they often do not have line authority their human relations skills are of crucial importance. The Institutional Research officer should be process oriented and not problem oriented. Again faculty recognition is important.

Research Question Four: To determine the experiences and training (e.g., professional certification, etc.) which would enhance perceptions of institutional research and/or institutional researchers for senior administrators, and to recommend to the AIR a program of professional development by which its members could become better prepared for positions of increased responsibility in Institutional Research and within the institution.

1. Do faculty things: research, teaching, public service. Get a faculty appointment even if adjunct.
2. Publish. Professional activity must not be limited to presentations at professional meetings. These are important but publishing is more important.
3. Study the current critical issues in higher education and those unique to your campus. An understanding of the dynamics of the institution especially the management and political issues is imperative. Take a pro-active approach.
3. Additional suggestions for Summer Academy:
 1. Information Technology
 2. Funding decisions and priorities
 3. Outcomes assessment
 4. Techniques to support classroom assessment activities
 5. Assessment of teaching effectiveness
 6. Assessment of the education environment of campus
 7. Faculty and staff evaluation
 8. DEFINITELY NOT A COURSE ON ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTING
4. Include mathematical modeling techniques for forecasting, trend lines, data base management especially that which pertains to public service in the local service area e.g. economic development data, and be certain this data is accessible from remote terminals. Also include the development of survey instruments to do needs assessment studies. These items were emphasized by Community College presidents.

Summary:

To be added after completion of Phase Two.

Footnotes

- ¹ Leedy, Paul D. (1980) Practical Research (3rd. Ed.), New York: MacMillan.
- ² Criteria, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- ³ The Association for Institutional Research, Policy Statement, p. 21, Directory 1987-88. Tallahassee, Fla.: The AIR, August, 1987.

⁴ Jones, Larry, paper presented at the annual forum of the Southern AIR, Houston, TX, October, 1988.

⁵ Saunders, Laura E. AIR Members: Who They Are, etc., paper presented at the annual AIR Forum, Phoenix, Arizona, May, 1988.

For more information on this study, please contact: **Dr. Edwin R. Smith**, College of Human Resources & Education, West Virginia University, P. O. Box 6122, Morgantown, WV 26506-6122, 304-293-3707.



FORT LAUDERDALE MARINA

Marriott.

1881 Southeast 17th Street • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316 • (305) 463-4000

The Fort Lauderdale Marina Marriott looks forward to accommodating you during your upcoming visit. Our staff looks forward to serving you.

With every reservation request for late arrival (arrival after 6:00 P.M.) we require that you either:

- 1) Enclose a check or money order in the amount of your first night's room rate . . .

— OR —

- 2) Provide the *entire* number from your credit card. Don't forget the expiration date and your signature please.

The Marina Marriott regrets that it cannot confirm your reservation request after 6:00 P.M. on the day of arrival without your guarantee of the reservation by one of the two methods listed above. Should you be unable to arrive on the date planned, your deposit will be refunded only if cancellation confirmation is obtained no later than 6:00 P.M. on your scheduled date of arrival.

**MAIL HOTEL RESERVATION FORM TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: ATTN: RESERVATIONS;
Fort Lauderdale Marina Marriott; 1881 Southeast 17th Street; Fort Lauderdale,
Florida 33316.**

Name (print) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Phone _____
For arrival on _____ (day) (date) (time) Depart on _____ (day) (date) (time)
Please reserve _____ No. of Rooms, for _____ People
Name(s) of person(s) sharing accommodations _____

Accommodation type requested: ☐ KING, ☐ DOUBLE/DOUBLE

☐ Carte Blanche ☐ Diners Club ☐ Check or money order enclosed
☐ American Express ☐ Visa Amount _____
☐ Master Card ☐ Discover

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature for guarantee _____

**SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION
FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH**

OCTOBER 9-13, 1990

**SINGLES \$75
DOUBLES \$75**

All reservation requests must be received by the following cut-off date: **September 18, 1990**
RESERVATION REQUESTS RECEIVED AFTER THE CUT-OFF DATE ARE SUBJECT TO DATE AND RATE AVAILABILITY. OUR CHECK-IN TIME IS 4:00 P.M. AND OUR CHECK-OUT IS 11:00 A.M. REQUESTS FOR DATES OTHER THAN THE CONFERENCE DATES LISTED ABOVE ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. ROOM RATES ARE SUBJECT TO STATE, CITY, AND LOCAL TAXES (CURRENTLY 9%).

