



Alabama Association for Institutional Research

NEWSLETTER

June 1992

Alabama Association for Institutional Research

ALAIR in Mobile

The Sixth Annual **ALAIR** Conference was held April 24, 1992 at the University of South Alabama, Brookley Conference Center.

Dr. Al Searway planned an excellent program on the theme of "Effectiveness in Higher Education," focusing on current issues related to institutional effectiveness. The highlights of the conference are outlined below:

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Cameron Fincher, University of Georgia Institute of Higher Education Institute. Dr. Fincher focused on the history of higher education and the need to maintain broad perspective in dealing with the future of higher education.

President's Panel: A panel of Alabama presidents representing postsecondary institutions was moderated by Dr. Hank Hector, Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. This was a great session with lots of discussion.

Panel of Self Study Directors: A panel of self study directors moderated by Dr. Bill Carr focused on Section 3 of the SACS Criteria.

Tools and Techniques: **ALAIR** members were featured as resource persons on special tools and techniques for institutional research.

Transfer Tracking Committee: Dr. Judy Miller (Enterprise State), Dr. Harriott Calhoun (Jefferson State), Dr. John Porter (UA), Al Searway (Jacksonville State), Sam Lowther (Auburn), and Debbie Dailey (UAB) met Thursday afternoon, prior to the **ALAIR** conference, to discuss progress on reporting standardized data to the two-year colleges on transfer students. A report from this committee at the business meeting on Friday indicated that a pilot report will be available in August.

Conference Evaluations

The conference evaluations have been analyzed by Harriott Calhoun. The ratings and a few comments pertaining to various elements of the conference are presented below:

	<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>
(1) <u>Publicity/Meeting Announcement</u> No Comments	76.5%	23.5%	.0%
(2) <u>Cost of Meeting</u> No comments	93.4%	5.7%	.0%
(3) <u>Handling of Registration</u> "Names on the name tags need to be larger/clearer"	97.2%	2.8%	.0%
(4) <u>Relevancy of Program</u> "Excellent" "Interesting diversity of perspectives" "Good-bright people with broad view and experience" "Difficult to hear" "Too general"	86.1%	13.9%	.0%
(5) <u>Overall Program Format</u> See above #4	74.3%	25.7%	.0%
(6) <u>Meeting Location</u> "Facilities were fine - distance was a problem"	75.0%	25.0%	.0%
(7) <u>Luncheon Menu/Food Quality</u> "Excellent Service"	80.6%	13.9%	5.6%
(8) <u>Business Meeting</u> "Was not able to attend" "It was difficult to hear"	41.9%	51.6%	6.5%

Other relevant comments related to the lack of minority representation, and the need to develop a better evaluation form: These concerns need to be considered in the future, and **ALAIR** needs to conduct further research on why certain individuals or groups are attracted to the meetings, and why others are not. Overall, the conference was very successful in promoting interaction among institutional researchers from across the state, and provided an excellent forum for interacting with some of the state leadership.

ALAIR Officers for 1992-93

The officers for 1992-93 are listed below:

President: Dr. Albert M. Searway
Director of Planning & Analysis
Jacksonville State University

Vice President: Dr. Harriott Calhoun
Director of Institutional Research
Jefferson State Community College

Secretary-Treasurer: Ms. Karen Freemon
Planning and Budgets Officer
University of Alabama in Huntsville

Nominating Committee:

Ms. Sue Baum, Chair
Computer and Information Science
Enterprise State Jr. College

Ms. Judy Elliott
Director of Institutional Research
Talladega College

Mr. Sam Lowther
Associate Director of Planning and Analysis
Auburn University

Please contact Harriott Calhoun with your ideas for the next conference, and please let any of these individuals know of interests you may have about getting involved in **ALAIR**. Please call!

ALAIR Bylaws Revised

The **ALAIR** Bylaws were revised at the annual conference as follows: (1) separated the Secretary-Treasurer's position into two positions and added additional responsibilities to the Secretary's existing duties, (2) added an additional year to the terms of these two positions, and (3) revised the electoral system so that only one slate of candidates, rather than two, will be presented to the membership in the future.

AIR in Atlanta

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR - national organization) met in

Atlanta between May 10-13 for its annual forum. The forum theme, "Education: The Global Perspective," centered on the internationalization of higher education. The opening keynote address was made by Sir William Taylor, the 1991-92 European AIR President, and former Vice Chancellor of Hull University. Sir William reflected on the challenge to education of reconciling local, regional, national and international interests and how new approaches must be developed to be effective in such an environment. Specific sessions were also offered on a number of topics such as technology, student information, funding, and institutional effectiveness.

Let Sam Know

Sam Lowther (Auburn University) is serving as the official liaison with SAIR on events taking place at institutions located in Alabama. If there are interesting developments at your institution which you wish to share with others in the Southeast, please contact Sam at 844-4765.

Member News

As printed in the last newsletter, Dr. Joseph Sutton suffered an attack of Guillian-Barre. He has been moved from Tennessee to Birmingham, where he is happy and showing progress daily. Letters and cards are welcome and should be sent to the following address:

Joseph T. Sutton
Spain Rehabilitation Center
619 South 19th Street
Birmingham, AL 35233

Congratulations to Diane Sherman of **ACHE**, whose son, William Walton, was born on December 1. His interests are mountain climbing and basketball.

Congratulations to Judy Rogers on earning her Ph.D.

Congratulations to Teresa Hall of Auburn, whose son, Evan Thomas, was born on April 19. His interests thus far are sleeping and waking up.

Dr. John Porter (UA) is retiring shortly, and he will be greatly missed! He has been an influential leader and institutional researcher in a manner that has positively impacted the State and profession.

Who are we missing - please let us know!

From the State Level - Hank Hector

Presented as follows are the questions formulated by Dr. Hector for the **ALAIR** Conference:

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FOR PANEL OF PRESIDENTS

Moderator: Hank J. Hector
Executive Director
Alabama Commission on Higher Education

1. State revenue projections for the remainder of the 1990s throughout the country are not encouraging. Most forecasters predict limited revenue growth and pressure to increase spending, particularly for Medicaid and corrections. The December 13, 1992 issue of Governor's Weekly Bulletin, for example, included this statement: "Forecasts for the future are sobering. Revenue growth will be slow; spending, particularly for health care and prison construction will continue to explode. Yet, citizens will oppose tax increases." As one official noted in a recent presentation to a meeting of State Higher Education Executive Officers, "There will be a progressive squeeze on state budgets - a 'structural imbalance' between state revenues and the cost of and need for state services. Higher education is not likely to fit at the top of the priority list." Given this outlook, what can higher education do to demonstrate institutional effectiveness and compete successfully for additional resources?
2. One strategy for addressing funding problems is to increase private support for the institution. How does an institution assess its effectiveness in fund raising?
3. The continuing problems in financing higher education raise an important question: Who should bear the cost of education? Rhode Island Associate Chancellor of Higher Education Richard Mumford noted in a recent article in Governing that this question opens an important debate . . . "the notion of a state paying most of the cost of public higher education is a relatively new one. In the mid-1950s, students and parents paid 50 to 60 percent of the costs of college; by the mid-1980s, that had dropped to 30 percent, and states were picking up much of the difference, especially at public institutions. 'Perhaps it's time to go back to where we were before - when the student was paying more of the cost of his own education'." That possibility is particularly sobering in Alabama where the proportion of Alabama family income required to pay for tuition is nearly 40 percent higher than other states in the region. How can institutions in Alabama continue to be effective in instruction, research, and service without placing a greater burden on students and their families for financing higher education?
4. Accountability for public tax dollars is a continuing theme on the public agenda. At the same time, institutions rarely miss an opportunity to provide data supporting the need for additional revenue. At a budget hearing for institutions of higher education several years ago, one state official remarked that it was amazing that each of the 16 four-year institutions had provided data which showed that each one was at the bottom in terms of state funding. Obviously, no institution wants to volunteer data that might be interpreted negatively, but the constant concern for accountability raises a question about the validity of data

which are presented. How can higher education be accountable and provide information to the public from a credible source that documents that the institutions are effectively meeting the needs of the State?

5. The April 15, 1992 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education included an article which described the mounting pressure to monitor and increase the time that professors spend in the classroom. According to the article, agencies in at least a dozen states are seeking information about the academic "work week" including the number of "contact hours" that faculty members spend with students in response to the public belief that the emphasis on undergraduate instruction has declined too much. Stephen M. Jordan, Deputy Executive Director for Finance and Planning at the Arizona Board of Regents, is quoted as saying: "There are perceptions out there that the faculty doesn't teach enough, that the faculty spends too much time doing research, that the faculty is overpaid." However, that same issue of The Chronicle also summarized preliminary findings from a recent research report that found that the more college faculty members teach, the less they are paid. How can institutions effectively balance the public concerns about faculty workload and declining emphasis on undergraduate education with faculty concerns about compensation?
6. Cameron Fincher delivered the keynote address to this group this morning on institutional effectiveness. Fincher's 1989 monograph Assessing Institutional Effectiveness includes a chapter on "Managing the Meaning of Institutional Effectiveness" by Ellen Earle Chaffee in which she lists common leadership mistakes in institutional effectiveness. Chaffee cites one of these mistakes as "Equating Growth With Size" noting that enrollment growth and building construction are often mistakenly considered the hallmarks of an effective institution. She states: "What is needed is leadership that takes pride in what exists at an institution while inexorably challenging it to become better - not bigger." In Alabama, we are currently facing this challenge in terms of the desire and determination by some leaders to build new campuses and extension centers despite the impact of this move on revenue available to support existing program and facilities. Are there alternatives to providing educational needs of our State in an effective manner without building new buildings? If so, what strategies can we use to encourage this development?
7. The funding formula in Alabama is a source of much study, discussion, and debate. Can we make the current formula more effective? Is the formula the most effective way to provide funding for higher education in the State?
8. Students in higher education are the products of the K-12 educational system. The state plan adopted recently by the Commission on Higher Education included a goal of collaboration which highlighted the need for partnerships and academic alliances between and among elementary and secondary education and the two-year and four-year institutions to improve the education of Alabama students at all levels. How can higher education in Alabama play a more effective role with K-12?

The first question generated so much discussion and interest that we were unable to address the remaining issues. This is an excellent basis for future discussions.