



ALAIR NEWSLETTER

Alabama Association for Institutional Research

December 1994

ALAIR NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The ALAIR Annual Conference for 1995 is scheduled for *April 20-21 at Troy State University at Dothan*. This will be our first time to meet in the southeastern part of the state, so we hope to have good representation from our current members and to see some new faces who may not have been able to travel to other sites in past years.

The conference theme is *The Changing Face of Institutional Research: New Responsibilities and New Techniques*. We hope to highlight both the expanding duties that many of us are having to assume (such as SPRE, Student Right to Know), as well as some of the new techniques and technologies that are now available to help us do our jobs. In particular, we want to exhibit ways in which some of the newer technologies can be accessed, even by those offices having relatively small budgets.

You will note that we have blocked out a two-day period for the conference. In recent years we have had increasing numbers of attendees arriving the night before the conference. Although we have gradually developed some limited social functions for that evening (and will do so again this year), we thought there might be some interest in one or more pre-conference workshops, as well. This year we will offer at least one such workshop, on a test basis, to determine the level of interest. There will be no

additional charge for this activity, but we will be asking individuals to register separately for each workshop. Please note that this is in addition to the conference itself, which will occur in its entirety on April 21, so if you are unable to attend on the 20th, please don't let that discourage you from coming to the conference.

We want to have as broad a level of participation as possible, so be thinking about what information or expertise that you have to offer your colleagues. You'd be surprised at what others may find interesting about your operation. Whether you have a paper, a presentation or a tools and techniques offering, somebody is interested. When the call for proposals comes out in the next few weeks, please respond. A group of our size can't depend upon a small central core; we need participation from every level.

If you have any ideas, questions or requests concerning the Annual Conference, please feel free to contact me (**phone: 334-844-4765; email: lowthgs@panda.auburn.edu**). The program isn't set in stone, and we can always use a good suggestion. I look forward to hearing from you, and to seeing you in April.

Sam Lowther
VP/President Elect

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) will sponsor a Newcomers Institute July 22-27, 1995 in Berkeley, California at the Clark Kerr Campus of the University of California. Participants will choose four of the six training modules: statistics, theory and practice of IR, effective reporting, data administration, campus culture and politics, and survey research. For more information watch the AIR newsletter or contact the AIR Executive Office (904) 644-4470.

AIR also will conduct an advanced institute at the University of Delaware August 12-16, 1995. For more information watch the AIR newsletter or contact the AIR Executive Office (904) 644-4470.

The Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR) will hold its annual conference in Roanoke, Virginia, October 21-24 1995. Debbie Dailey, who will serve as Program Chair for this conference, would like to encourage all ALAIR members to attend and to participate. If you are interested in helping to plan, contact Debbie at UAB at 934-3254.

Be sure to pass this
newsletter on to someone in
your office or on your
campus who might find it
useful or of interest!

MEMBER NEWS

An overdue Alabama hello and welcome is extended to *Dr. Bill Fendley, Director of Institutional Research at the University of Alabama*. Bill comes to UA from the University of Virginia. Many of you know him from his active involvement in SAIR and AIR. Glad to have you, Bill!

Jim Purcell, Director of Institutional Research at Shelton State Community College and ALAIR member-at-large, has taken a new position at Our Lady of the Lake College of Allied Health and Nursing in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Vicki Hawsey, Reid State Technical College, has agreed to serve as a member-at-large to the ALAIR executive committee, replacing Jim Purcell.

In the recent elections of the Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR), *Debbie Dailey (UAB)* was elected vice president/president elect, *Harriott Calhoun (JSCC)* was elected secretary, and *Mary Beth Adams (UAB)* and *Teresa Hall (AU)* were elected to the nominating committee.

If you have news about yourself or another ALAIR member, be sure to let us know so it can be shared. Send news to Mary Beth Adams at UAB, AB 420, Birmingham, AL 35294.

RESOURCE DIRECTORIES IN THE MAIL

The newest edition of the ALAIR Directory of Resource Personnel is presently being sent to all current ALAIR members. It has been updated and revised to include additional helpful information. Watch your mail!

ALAIR TRAVEL GRANT FOR 1995 AIR FORUM

All members are encouraged to complete the travel grant application for the 1995 AIR Forum. This opportunity is provided to assist ALAIR members who might not otherwise be able to attend the Forum in Boston. Last year's recipient was Vicki Hawsey, Reid State, and she has the following comments:

As a relative newcomer to the institutional research profession, I was thrilled to have been selected to receive the travel grant to the AIR Forum. Not only was it my first time to attend the AIR Forum, but it was also my first time in New Orleans. Truly, this was the best professional development experience I have ever had, and I would encourage any person in this profession to take advantage of the opportunity to attend the Forum should it be available. Any participant will leave with a sense of having shared in a wonderful experience.

Memorial Day weekend in New Orleans found the famous French Quarter alive with approximately 1,300 AIR members. Cafe au lait, beignet, muffaletta, Cajun Cuisine, Mulatte's, Cajun dancing, hurricanes, Preservation Hall, gumbo, the Riverwalk, Jackson Square, and of course, Bourbon Street were all "must dos" while in New Orleans, and AIR members were frantically attempting to experience it all between the back-to-back and overlapping sessions packed into those few days. AIR Forum agenda booklets revealed much to do in little time, and the variety and quality of sessions were unsurpassed.

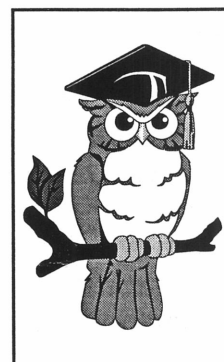
The sessions were fantastic, and of course, I welcomed the opportunity to "sit at the feet of the masters," experts such as Nichols, Terrenzini, Middaugh, and Alabama's own Calhoun. Pages upon pages of notes, and a tote bag full of prized samples, papers, and other materials accompanied me home, as well as two very tired feet. I attended pre-conference workshops on Saturday

and Sunday: Theory and Practice of Institutional Research and From Start Up to the First Annual Report: How to Begin or Restructure an Institutional Research Office. Both workshops were intense and contained much useful information for my own office.

ALAIR, thank you again for affording me an opportunity to participate in such a worthwhile professional development activity. I can honestly say that AIR people are some of the greatest.

So don't forget to make plans for the 1995 Forum or to submit the travel grant application!

**WISE UP: MARK
YOUR CALENDAR**



Jan 25	Travel grant deadline
April 20-21	ALAIR Conference
May 28-31	AIR Forum
July 22-27	AIR Newcomers Institute
Aug 12-16	AIR Advanced Institute

SAIR MEETS IN SAN ANTONIO

SAIR's 1994 annual meeting was held in San Antonio October 8-11. 263 institutional researchers attended, 22 of whom were from Alabama. It was proposed that the 1996 meeting be held on Alabama's gulf coast at Perdido Key. It will provide a great opportunity to showcase the beauty of our state but will require the help and support of all ALAIR members. Plan to help in 1996!

REFLECTIONS ON THE FORUM

-Harriott D. Calhoun

The 34th Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) was held May 28 - June 1, New Orleans, Louisiana. It is my pleasure to share with ALAIR members my reflections on the 1994 AIR Forum with the hope that my remarks will encourage many of you to make the 1995 Forum a priority. In my experience, the Forum is the single most beneficial professional development opportunity available to institutional research practitioners.

Activities actually started for me on Saturday when I attended an excellent pre-forum workshop. A wide selection of one-day and half-day workshops are available on Saturday and Sunday before each Forum. The selection is such that both newcomers to institutional research and experienced practitioners are able to find appropriate opportunities for professional development. Since workshops frequently reach their registration limit, those who want to attend a pre-Forum workshop should register early.

At the opening general session on Sunday evening, Michael Ferrari, President of Drake University, spoke on "Transforming American Education." He warned that now is the time for higher education leaders to embrace strategies for transforming teaching and learning, administrative operations, and institutional accountability before they are imposed by external forces. He perceives society's emphasis on higher education to have shifted from "access" to "quality and learning." Society, he says, wants assurance of learning, and we don't have good information on student learning. To say that learning is hard to measure, however, is hardly an adequate response. According to Ferrari, higher education will need three things in order to shift its focus toward teaching and learning:

1. Information (*We can't improve teaching without assessing learning.*)

2. Incentives (*We don't encourage teaching by only rewarding research and publication.*)

3. Leadership (*If something must be done, we had better do it ourselves before someone else does it to us.*)

The program for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday included general sessions, concurrent sessions for panel and paper presentations, special interest group meetings, table topic discussions, and "special events." One can start early in the morning and find relevant, informative sessions to attend throughout the day. The biggest problem is in choosing among the many options available at every time period.

The Forum banquet always follows a theme that reflects the locale. This year it was "A Mardi Gras Extravaganza" which included a full parade (right there in the hotel!) with police escort, marching band, king and queen, costumes, etc. With the Sunday Forum Reception, the forum banquet on Monday, the ALAIR get-together on Tuesday, and Wednesday's Awards Luncheon, one can find ample opportunity for "networking" and relaxing during the busy days of attending presentations.

The AIR Forum is exceptionally well managed. Facilities are excellent, logistics are handled smoothly, and the program has breadth and depth in content. National meetings are expensive, but in the case of the AIR Forum, there is definitely "value added." The ALAIR Travel Grant is a possibility for helping to cover expenses, so watch for the application or enquire with any ALAIR officer for more information.

I hope to see you in Boston for the **35th AIR Forum (The Sheraton Boston, May 28-31, 1995)**. To get on the mailing list to receive AIR Forum announcements and registration materials, **call (904) 644-4470 or write to The Association for Institutional Research, 314 Stone Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306.**

ALAIR TRAVEL GRANT APPLICATION
for the 1995 AIR Forum

Name/Title _____
Institution _____
Address _____

Please provide a brief statement describing your financial need for the travel grant and the ways in which this conference will contribute to your professional development.

How long have you been a member of ALAIR? _____

Please indicate any ALAIR offices you have held or any committees on which you have served.

Indicate any positions you have held in AIR and/or any responsibilities you have at the next conference. (Note: Prior involvement in AIR is not a criterion for eligibility for the grant.)

Return this form by **January 25** to:

Dr. Judy Miller
Director of Institutional Research and Planning
Enterprise State Junior College
P.O. Box 1300, 600 Plaza Drive
Enterprise, AL 36331

Have you renewed your ALAIR membership for 1994-95? To continue to receive the newsletter, conference registration materials, as well as materials from other groups using our membership list, you should be a current member of ALAIR. If you did not attend the annual conference in Huntsville, April 4-5, or renew your membership at that time or since then, please complete the brief form below and mail it along with \$15 to Brenda Bryant, Alabama State University, 915 South Jackson Street, Montgomery, AL 36101. An institutional membership is available for \$20 and covers 2 individuals.

Name _____ Title (circle one) Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Dr.

Position _____

Institution _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____

E-mail _____

ALAIR Newsletter
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