



# Alabama Association of Institutional Research

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## Message from the President

Hello from beautiful Montgomery, Alabama! I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer. It is fall semester at our postsecondary institutions, so I want to take the opportunity to express gratitude to the ALAIR members who serve Alabama students with excellence. We all serve as lighthouse keepers to guide our faculty and administrators to make well-grounded decisions and evaluate effectiveness. Just like lighthouse keepers, ours can be a solitary endeavor. I know I sometimes feel alone in illuminating best IR and assessment practices. This is why the 2017 ALAIR conference was designed to give members time and freedom to connect with colleagues from diverse colleges across the State. I hope that attendees were able to share experiences and find opportunities for collaboration. Let's keep connecting, because together we can light a path through the shoals for Alabama to meet its educational and workforce needs.

In July, I became President of ALAIR. I cannot express enough how much the assistance and support from the 2016-2017 Executive Committee has meant to me over the last year. Without the caring mentorship of the Past-President, Toner Evans, I would have surely crashed upon the shores planning the 2016 conference! And, Julianna Proctor was no ordinary secretary! She so often calmed the waters with her outstanding organizational skills, always mixed with good humor! Throughout the years, one of the most valuable members of our organization has been Tienhan Ma. Tien has offered her services in any needed capacity, and willingly served as treasurer for two terms. It is not easy keeping our finances in order and helping everyone register and pay for conferences. Lesley Shotts has also served ALAIR for multiple years. As Member-at-Large, Lesley did many thankless, behind-the-scenes tasks to help keep the ALAIR lantern lit and pointed in the right direction. *I appreciate the work of each of you, and look forward to our work together this upcoming year.*

Thank you for everyone who contributed to the success of the 2017 ALAIR CommUNITY! Conference. I want to share my appreciation of all of my wonderful colleagues at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) who co-hosted the event. Jessica Carroll (organizer extraordinaire!!!), Cara Mia Braswell, and Anita Allman all worked to make sure that everything went smoothly at the conference venue (and the other event locations). At the Alabama Community College System (ACCS), my supervisor, Barbara Anne Spears gave me her full support and much-needed encouragement, and Sacha Smith and Virginia Frazer provided critical help coordinating and setting up the meals. Special recognition is deserved for Carl Stockton, AUM Chancellor, Jimmy Baker, ACCS Chancellor, and Russ Rothamer, ACCS Chief Academic Officer. Statistics and information about the success of the conference are included elsewhere in this newsletter.

Keeping with the theme of this message, I want to close by sharing a quote by George Bernard Shaw, who said "I can think of no other edifice constructed by man as altruistic as a lighthouse. They were built only to serve." Let us all keep serving our students, our institutions, and our State with dedication and altruism.

Kelly Birchfield  
2017-2018 ALAIR President



# Meet the 2017-2018 Executive Committee



## **Past-President**

[Toner Evans](#)

Assistant Director

Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Effectiveness  
Samford University



## **President**

[Kelly Birchfield](#)

Director

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research  
Alabama Community College System



## **Vice-President**

[Julianna Proctor](#)

Associate Director

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment  
The University of Alabama



## **Secretary**

[Hayley Johnson](#)

Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Retention

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Retention

The University of West Alabama



## **Treasurer**

[Mandy Lanier](#)

Director

Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
Wallace Community College



## **Member-at-Large**

[Ginny Cockerill](#)

Assistant Director

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

The University of Alabama in Huntsville



## **Member-at-Large**

[Wendy Broyles](#)

Director of Assessment

Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

Troy University



## **Member-at-Large**

[Lesley Shotts](#)

Research and Grants Coordinator

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

J.F. Drake State Community & Technical College

# 2017 Conference Highlights

Our Spring 2017 conference was a great success, where attendees had the opportunity to meet and share with colleagues across Alabama.

**71 professionals attended the meeting!**

**9 Informative presentations!**

**65 Tickets for Sherlock Holmes!**

**On-site Sponsors:**

**Alabama Supercomputer Authority**

**Alliant Data Systems**

**LiveText**

**Sponsor of Networking Prizes:**

**Campus Labs**



## 2017 Best Paper/Presentation Award

**Dr. Channing R. Ford** and **Ms. Emily Wilkins**, Auburn University, won the 2017 Best Paper/Presentation Award for *Assessment Best Practices: Using Focus Groups to Gain Insight and Implement Changes to the Curricular and Co-Curricular*.

Channing and Emily will be giving their award winning presentation at the 2017 SAIR conference in Fort Worth, TX. They will both receive \$300.00 from ALAIR to offset their travel and registration expenses for SAIR.

# 2017 Business Meeting Minutes

ALAIR Members,

Please take some time to look at the draft minutes from the Friday, March 10, 2017 Business Meeting, which was held during the luncheon at the 2017 Conference. These minutes will be reviewed, corrected, and approved at the Business Meeting at the close of the 2018 Conference.

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**Call to Order:** After morning conference sessions on the Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) campus, the 2017 Alabama Association for Institutional Research (ALAIR) Annual Business Meeting was called to order by President Toner Evans at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, March 10, 2017. President Evans welcomed ALAIR members and thanked the conference hosts, AUM and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). He also expressed gratitude to the Program Chair Kelly Birchfield and her team for their efforts in making this a great conference.

A moment of silence was observed to remember Donna Sanders, Troy University, who passed away in October 2016. President Evans asked members to keep the prayers coming for those in need. He also announced that the husband of Angel Jowers (UWA) is now cancer-free.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the April 15, 2016, ALAIR Business Meeting were distributed at the registration desk with the conference materials. Secretary Julianna Proctor highlighted items from last year. President Evans asked the membership if there were any questions or changes to the minutes. There were no suggested changes and the motion passed to accept the minutes.

**Treasurer's Report:** The ALAIR Treasurer's Report was distributed at the registration desk with the conference materials. Treasurer Tienhan Ma stated that the March 8, 2017, balance of ALAIR funds at Regions was \$23,039.22 (\$5,654.24 of which is in a certificate of deposit). The total cash on hand does not include all registration fees or conference costs. The report also includes a detailed three-year comparison of the 2014, 2015, and 2016 conference revenue and expenses. The 2017 Conference had 73 members registered, 4 cancellations, and 2 on-site registrations, resulting in 71 attendees (a 29% increase from last year's conference). This year, members were given the choice to pay by credit card using the PayPal account set up by Treasurer Ma; however, that option was not available during the conference. President Evans asked the membership if there were any questions or changes to the Treasurer's Report. There were no suggested changes and the motion passed to accept the Treasurer's Report.

**ALAIR Best Paper 2016:** President Evans congratulated the 2016 ALAIR Best Paper recipient, Wendy Broyles (Troy University) for her presentation: "Best Cinematography: Personality and Inter-Office Relations". Wendy plans to use the \$300 ALAIR stipend to travel and present at AIR in Washington, DC, in May 2017. President Evans also acknowledged the 2015 ALAIR Best Paper recipient, Andrew Luna of the University of North Alabama. Conference attendees will be given the opportunity to nominate the ALAIR Best Paper for the 2017 Conference during the online conference evaluation process.

**Joseph T. Sutton Leadership Award 2017:** There was no recipient of the Joseph T. Sutton Leadership Award for 2017. President Evans acknowledged the 2016 recipient, Mimi Johnson of Trenholm State Community College.

## OLD BUSINESS

**ALAIR.ORG Website:** After many years of being hosted by Auburn University (AU), the ALAIR.ORG website is now being hosted by The University of Alabama (UA). In addition to the historical information and forms currently available on the website, we'd like our members to share:

- conference presentations,
- institution/office news,
- job postings,
- personnel changes (new faces, new places/job change, retiring, etc.), and
- pictures (conference, office, etc.).

Please send your information to [jproctor@ua.edu](mailto:jproctor@ua.edu).

## NEW BUSINESS

**Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Forum 2017:** President Evans reminded the ALAIR membership that registration is underway for the upcoming 2017 AIR Forum in Washington, DC. The Forum will be May 29-June 2, 2017, at the Washington Marriott Marquis. For more details, visit the <http://www.airweb.org> website.



# 2017 Business Meeting Minutes

**Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR) Conference 2017:** ALAIR member and SAIR Vice President and Program Chair Matthew Campbell invited the ALAIR membership to attend the SAIR 2017 Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. The Conference will be October 7-10, 2017, at the Worthington Renaissance. The hotel layout is perfect for hosting conferences. For more details, visit the <http://sair.org/> website.

**ALAIR Conference 2018:** President Evans asked for a show of hands to determine the level of interest in having the next ALAIR Conference at the beach. After seeing overwhelming interest from the membership, he asked for feedback about any concerns, stating that the in-state per diem of \$75 per day would cover one hotel stay in the amount of \$150. It was suggested to consider a location over the state border in Florida and to keep spring break schedules (postsecondary and high school) in mind. The Board will consider these suggestions while searching for an early March 2018 conference location and facility.

**ALAIR Board Elections 2017-18:** President Evans expressed thanks to the Nominating/Awards Committee, consisting of Past President and Committee Chair Angel Jowers (UWA), Karen Hamby (Samford), and Hayley Johnson (UWA). He then presented the 2017-18 slate of officers for approval by the membership. The slate consists of the following nominees:

- **Vice President/Conference Chair:** Julianna Proctor (The University of Alabama)
- **Treasurer:** Tienhan Ma (Jacksonville State University)
- **Secretary:** Hayley Johnson (University of West Alabama)
- **Nominating Committee:** Justin Chandler (Auburn University at Montgomery)  
Angel Jowers (University of West Alabama)
- **Members-At-Large:** Wendy Broyles (Troy University)  
Ginny Cockerill (The University of Alabama in Huntsville)

There being no nominations from the floor, the motion to accept the proposed slate of officers was made and seconded. The motion passed and the slate was accepted.

**Announcements:** Vice President and Conference Chair Kelly Birchfield (ACCS) thanked the ALAIR membership for their attendance and was delighted to see all the new faces from a wide variety of roles and institutions, truly making this a CommUNITY Conference. Next, she thanked the sponsors/exhibitors (Alabama Supercomputer Authority, Alliant Data Systems, and LiveText) for their important role and support in making this ALAIR conference a great one.

In addition, Kelly thanked these organizations for their contribution of promotional items for the conference:

Auburn University at Montgomery  
Bevill State Community College  
Jefferson State Community College  
Southern Union Community College  
Trenholm State Community College

Kelly also thanked the Alabama Community College Association (ACCA) for their donation of conference bags and printing costs.

Kelly offered special thanks for the invaluable support and teamwork of Jessica Carroll (Auburn University at Montgomery) and Sacha Smith (Alabama Community College System). Kelly also acknowledged the support of Anita Allman and Cara Mia Braswell, both of Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM).

Finally, in keeping with ALAIR tradition, Kelly presented President Toner Evans with an engraved wooden box to show our appreciation and sincere thanks for all of his support and service to ALAIR.

Finally, Kelly acknowledged the support of those that were instrumental in pulling the conference together.

**Focus on Networking:** Kelly closed the conference by announcing the winners of the networking competition. Attendees were asked to meet as many colleagues as possible and gather contact information on the back side of their business cards. Business cards were returned to encourage after-conference contact with our new professional peers. Networking prizes were provided by Campus Labs and the list of winners follows:

First Prize (\$50): Jon Acker (UA) with 54 contacts  
Second Prize (\$25) Wendy Broyles (Troy) with 47 contacts  
Third Prize (\$25) Hubert Griffin (J.F. Ingram State Technical College)

Kelly asked Jon Acker to reach out to his 54 contacts after the conference and properly introduce himself.

**Adjournment:** The IPEDS Workshop follows the Business Meeting at 2:00 p.m. There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

# Reminder: ALAIR Awards



Every year, ALAIR offers several opportunities to recognize leaders and contributors to our profession. Unfortunately, nominations are rarely submitted from members. Please check out these opportunities and consider nominating someone deserving or applying for these awards.



## APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED



The **Sam Lowther Travel Grant** provides \$300.00 to help an ALAIR member travel to the annual SAIR Conference or AIR Forum. “The grant honors the memory of our colleague, Sam Lowther, Senior Analyst, from Auburn University, who recognized the importance of participation in professional organizations in the pursuit of individual and institutional excellence.”

**To Apply: Complete the [linked application](#) and return it to [Kelly.Birchfield@accs.edu](mailto:Kelly.Birchfield@accs.edu) by Friday, September 29th. The winner will be notified prior to the beginning of the SAIR conference on October 4th and can choose to have the grant awarded to offset travel costs to either the 2017 SAIR Conference or the 2018 AIR Forum.**



## SPRING, 2018 Nominations



The **Joseph T. Sutton Leadership Award** recognizes “Alabamians who have demonstrated leadership and outstanding accomplishment in the field of institutional research and related fields.” There were no nominees for this award in 2017. The call for 2018 nominations will occur in spring 2018, so be thinking about who you could recognize for this honor.

Nominees should have:

- provided exemplary service and leadership and who have actively supported and enhanced the goals of ALAIR,
- served as an officer, committee member, or conference host of ALAIR, SAIR or AIR and made presentations or otherwise volunteered,
- had a career in institutional research or a related field and exemplified leadership, accomplishment, and innovation, and
- contributed to the field of institutional research through specific accomplishments and innovative endeavors which enhance the field, institution, or community (local, state nation).

Check out the [ALAIR Website](#)! On it, you can find some great resources and information. If you want to learn more about how the organization has grown over the years, you might enjoy looking at [historical newsletters](#).

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We want to hear from you! Please send news and information to share on the website to [Julianna Proctor](#). Tell us who has been hired, promoted, or has changed jobs. Let us know what presentations your office staff members have presented at professional conversations. If you have a job opening, have it listed on the [ALAIR Jobs page](#).

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The new ALAIR listserv is designed for members to communicate and support each other. It is a good way for professionals in Alabama to ask questions or to share good practices and advice. To submit a message, address an e-mail to [ALAIR-L@LISTSERV.UA.EDU](mailto:ALAIR-L@LISTSERV.UA.EDU). If a colleague is not subscribed to the service, direct them to the [ALAIR website](#) to join.

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Plans are in the works for an exciting 2018 ALAIR conference at the beach! Watch for messages posted on the listserv or for information to be added to the [ALAIR Conference page](#) to learn more.

# Upcoming Professional Opportunities



**Southern Association  
for Institutional Research**

The [SAIR 2017 Conference](#) will be held October 7-10 in Fort Worth, TX. The ALAIR Special Interest Group will meet in the Pecos 1 room at 11:15 am to 12:00 pm on Tuesday, October 10. Please join us if you are able!



The [2018 AIR Forum](#) will be held May 28—June 1, 2018 in Orlando Florida.



Two [Substantive Change Workshops](#) will be hosted by SACSCOC. One will be on September 29th, 2017 in Tampa, Florida, and the other will be on October 27th, 2017 in Versailles, Kentucky.

The 2017 [Annual Meeting](#) will be held December 2-5, 2017 in Dallas, Texas.