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# ALAIR NEWSLETTER

FALL 2020



Shannon Levitzke

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Everyone!

I hope you are all in good health and staying safe. Things have certainly changed since we were all together at the annual conference in Orange Beach. I don't know about you, but it seems like that was years ago instead of only seven months.



I've been reading the many articles and studies that have been released in the last few months discussing the impact of the pandemic on institutions of higher education. It is clear our roles are more important than ever as we help our institutions navigate this new landscape. I continue to be impressed by and draw inspiration from the flexibility and innovation demonstrated by so many colleges and universities. The resilience shown by our students, faculty and staff remind me of an anonymous quote I read many years ago, "The difference between stumbling blocks and steppingstones is how you use them".

Speaking of flexibility and innovation, be sure to take a look at the update on possible options for professional development provided by our Vice-President, Jacob Pleitz. While we do not yet know if we will be able to have a traditional conference this year, the executive board is working hard to support our membership by providing meaningful professional development opportunities.

Stay safe everyone!

Lesley Shotts  
ALAIR President 2020-2021

## CONFERENCE UPDATE

Greetings ALAIR Members!

I hope each of you are doing well during these interesting times. It is wild to think the fall semester is approximately halfway over for so quickly for many of us! Given the state of uncertainty regarding travel budgets and ensuring the safety of each of our members, we decided on June 19th to survey the membership to gather more information about their thoughts regarding the 2021 ALAIR conference. John Glasscock did a tremendous job putting together a Qualtrics survey to gather information regarding travel budgets, attitudes towards in-person vs. virtual conferences, and other feelings regarding the general COVID situation. In the time that the survey was open, it was viewed by 53 members with 44 completions of the survey, for a completion rate of 83%. The salient points from the survey are:

- 32% of respondents stated that their universities had temporarily suspended approving travel requests.
- 53% of respondents were unsure of the status of travel funding available to their offices.
- Only 31.8% of respondents are interested in attending an in-person conference, while 54.5% would be interested in attending a virtual conference.

Given these results, the ALAIR executive committee proposed a series of alternative opportunities for professional development and membership education. These opportunities were presented at the ALAIR meeting on Thursday, October 1st where members were encouraged to give their feedback. The reception appeared to be fairly warm.

Specific opportunities for professional development included 3 options. The first option encourages members to write and publish proceedings on various topics related to the institutional research field. The second option encouraged members to pre-record talks to share with members at their viewing leisure, while the third option encouraged a live virtual presentation format. Each of these options provides unique advantages, and we hope that in providing a variety of opportunities for presentation and education each member of ALAIR can find an opportunity that best suits them to educate their fellow members. Potential ideas for topics include things such as: IPEDS, Assessment, intro to IR (including a glossary, important websites for new IR staff / analysts, etc.), excel tips and tricks, data visualization, dashboard building, CDS, etc. The list can be extremely diverse and we can encourage members to also submit their own ideas and make the professional development opportunities as wide and diverse as the ALAIR membership.

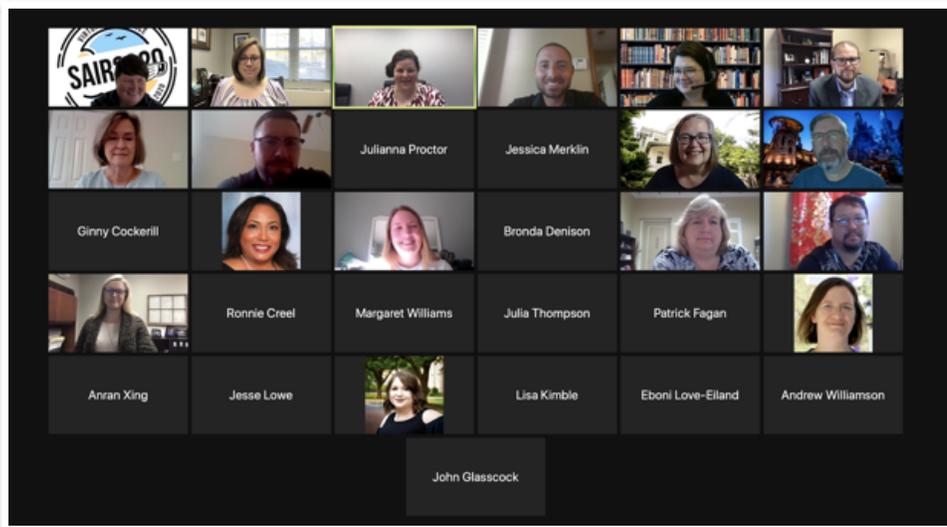
Along with these prospects, membership discussed providing other chances for professional development including bringing in guest speakers for online seminars as well potentially holding an in-person conference if one can be held safely and budget approval allows for travel. Each of these options is currently being explored as we seek to provide ALAIR with the best and most informative experience while also emphasizing the well-being of our membership.

I look forward to hearing your feedback on these opportunities as well as any way we can assist you to make ALAIR the best association possible. Thank you again for allowing me to serve as Vice-President / Conference Chair for the current year. Serving our membership and providing opportunities for learning and growth is a wonderful opportunity and I look forward to a fun and informative upcoming year.

Best Wishes,

Jacob D. Pleitz, Ph.D.

**ALAIR AT SAIR!**



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUM is hiring a Senior Director for Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation. Apply at <http://www.jobs.aum.edu/postings/4337>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2020 SACSCOC Annual Meeting, to be held virtually December 2-4 and 7-9: <https://sacscoc.org/annual-meeting/>
- 2021 AIR Forum, to be held in Washington, DC, May 24-28: <https://www.airweb.org/>

## ALAIR LEADERSHIP

**PRESIDENT:** Lesley Shotts, J.F. Drake State Community and Technical College

**VICE PRESIDENT/CONFERENCE CHAIR:** Jacob Pleitz, University of Alabama

**PAST PRESIDENT:** Wendy Broyles, Troy University

**SECRETARY:** Shannon Levitzke, Lurleen B. Wallace Community College

**TREASURER:** Nareiko Stephens, Jefferson State Community College

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** Jesse Lowe, University of Alabama at Birmingham

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** John Glasscock, Auburn University at Montgomery

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